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ABSTRACT

This document presents a statistics snapshot of young people, aged 15 to 24 years. It provides a broad overview of trends documenting the direction of changes in social behavior and economic circumstances. The projected decline in the total number of youth from 43 million in 1980 to 35 million in 1995 will affect marriage and childbearing patterns, higher education enrollments, armed forces recruiting, the nation's labor pool, and the demand for housing and consumer goods. However, the percentage of minority youth will increase and their comparative disadvantages will have even greater labor market significance. The following highlights are discussed: (1) most youth live at home longer, and one in six lives in a low income household; (2) college enrollment and completion rates have increased for females but are significantly lower for males and Blacks since the 1970s, and poor youth are more likely to drop out of school than are those from more affluent families: (3) the youth unemployment rate averaged about 11 percent in 1989 with Blacks and Hispanics experiencing the highest unemployment; (4) almost half of the youth marry at age 25 years old or older and the number of births to women under 25 is less than half the 1960 rate, but more than half of all births to teenagers are out-of-wedlock; (5) nearly 30 percent of the households maintained by youth have incomes below the poverty level; and (6) most youth enjoy good health and are likely to live longer than any earlier generation, but they engage in potentially health-damaging behaviors and comprise the segment of the population most likely to be involved with crime. Statistical data are included on 12 graphs and 19 tables. A list of the Grant Commission's publications on Youth and America's Future is appended. (FMW)

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The William T. Grant Foundation
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AMERICAN YOUTH: A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

by James R. Wetzel

Enlarged & Updated Edition, August 1989

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YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:

THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

When William Thomas Grant established the Grant Foundation in 1936, he sought a better understanding of the ways in which individuals adapt to the vicissitudes of life. Touched in his professional life by the importance of caring human relationships, Mr. Grant wished to "help children develop what is in them" so they would better "enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them."

Fifty years later, recognizing the special needs of older adolescents in a changing society, the Foundation's Trustees established **Youth and America's Future** with much the same purpose: its charge is not to engage in new research but to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers and, thus, help our nation chart a better future for youth.

The Foundation's President, Robert J. Haggerty, M.D., has described the Commission's unique perspective:

"Against a rising chorus of legitimate concern about the many problems facing today's youth, the Foundation has initiated this Commission on Youth and America's Future to speak in a different voice. It will explore the strengths of America's young men and women, their families, and the programs and community institutions that serve them. We adopt this approach not to diminish the importance of the problems that exist, but to learn the lessons of success. The Foundation is confident that this effort to look with renewed respect at youth, where they stride as well as where they stumble, will help forge the links of understanding and mutual responsibility that make our democracy strong."

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Foreword

At a time when Americans are deeply concerned about their youth, it is important to maintain an informed perspective on the major developments and trends affecting them. Without such a perspective, we are too easily swayed toward stereotyping all youth through particularly powerful anecdotal evidence, rather than seeing them as they really are.

Youth and America's Future: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship became acutely aware of this problem in 1986 as it started its study of American youth, ages 16 to 24, who were not headed for college. Concerned that inadequate factual data might lead to an untrue picture of American youth and, hence, distort its conclusions, the Commission sought to compile a broad, accurate statistical profile of this age group based primarily on the most recent Census Bureau data available.

We were fortunate to have the help of James R. Wetzel, a labor market economist and recognized expert on demographic trends, in this endeavor. The resulting document, *American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot*, was first published in June of 1987. The picture it draws of young Americans' education, employment, income, drug use, and rates of marriage, pregnancy, and child birth suggests that while a substantial portion of young people experience serious difficulties in some or all of these areas, the size of that group is not on a scale that should stigmatize an entire generation. Indeed, in some areas, such as in most kinds of drug use and eventual high school completion rates, the data are more encouraging than many Americans might assume.

When reviewing Mr. Wetzel's data it is essential to remember the enormous diversity that these aggregate figures contain. National statistics cannot help but mask the degree of troubles faced by young people living in particular neighborhoods and in certain areas of the country. Their difficulties must not be minimized by unwarranted optimism. It is equally important, however, that we not over-generalize the difficulties of some young people and so overlook the determined efforts of the vast majority of American youth to contribute to their families and communities and prepare themselves for successful futures. The data in Wetzel's *Statistical Snapshot* lend balance to these views.

Gratified by the response of policymakers, practitioners, students, and researchers to this comprehensive and highly useful resource, the Commission is pleased to be able to issue an entirely revised and expanded addition reflecting the latest data. As with other publications of **Youth and America's Future,** material in this pamphlet may be reproduced or quoted at will, as long as its source is mentioned.

Harold Howe II
Chairperson
Youth and America's Future:
The William T. Grant Foundation
Commission on Work, Family and
Citizenship

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American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot

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American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot

Highlights

This statistical snapshot of young people—their living arrangements, education, labor market experience, marriage, and family formation patterns—is intended to provide a useful resource for those concerned with youth and America's future. It is designed to provide a broad overview of trends that influence the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and to document the direction of current changes in the social behavior and economic circumstances of our nation's youth.

From a peak of almost 43 million in 1980, the number of American youth (ages 15 to 24 years) has dropped to about 37 million, a decline of 13 percent. Their number is projected to decline further to only 35 million in 1995.

Almost eight million fewer youth in 1995 than in 1980 undoubtedly means sharp changes in our society. Indeed, marriage and childbearing patterns already are dramatically different than in the past. The continuing decline in the supply of young people has major implications for higher education enrollments, armed forces recruiting, the composition of the nation's labor pool, and the outlook for demand in housing and consumer markets.

While the total is declining, Hispanic youth are increasing rapidly, and the number of black youth is declining at a slower rate than whites. Thus, the percentage of minority youth will increase and their comparative disadvantages (e.g. lower educational attainment) will have even greater labor market significance as we move into the next century.

Living Arrangements

Today's youth choose to live at home longer. Well over half of our 15 to 24-year-olds still are living at home with both or one parent—up from 36 percent at home in 1960. At the same time, early marriage has plummeted. Also, leaving home to live alone is becoming less popular; the number of youth doing so dropped nearly one-fourth between 1980 and 1988.

Poverty is an everyday fact of life for many youth. During 1987, one in every six lived in a low-income household, a significant rise from the ratios of the 1970s. The highest poverty rates were experienced by young unwed mothers, but rates were high among teens living on their own and those living in a single-parent home with their mothers. Because of the close relationship of poverty and low educational attainment, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and deviant behavior, youngsters in poverty must be considered as "at risk" and likely to need guidance and support if they are to achieve self-sufficiency.

Youth in School

Our nation has made amazing progress in widespread education over the past half century. Today, 86 percent of young adults are high school graduates, more than twice the percentage of 1940. Moreover, 22 percent have completed four or more years of college, almost quadruple the 1940 figure. However, concern is widespread that we have lost our educational momentum. All of the net improvement in schooling had taken place by the late 1970s, and the high school and college completion rates of today's 25 to 29-year-olds are marginally lower than those of their peers of the late 1970s.

College enrollment and completion rates have turned up for young women, but are significantly lower for young men and black youth than they were in the late 1970s. In part, that may result from economic trends. More high school graduates are from poor families and college costs have risen more rapidly than the overall cost of living. Regardless of race, students from poor families are three to four times more likely to drop out of school than those from more affluent households.

At all education levels, Hispanic youth are less likely to be in school than black or white youth, and, at all ages, they have a much higher percentage who have not completed high school.

Youth at Work

Most youth work and receive a paycheck. Three of every four worked for pay sometime during 1987 and more than 29 million had individual income. Teenagers with income—12 million in all—brought home an average of $1,900. Men and women in the 20 to 24-year-old age group who had income, averaged $8,729 and $6,895, respectively, in 1987. Minority youth had lower incomes than whites.

Despite a much stronger economy and steep declines in the number of youth, their jobless rate averaged about 11 percent early in 1989. Regardless of education level,

black and Hispanic youth experience higher unemployment than whites. Among teens, for example, rates in 1988 were 28.3 percent for blacks, 21 percent for Hispanics, 11.6 percent for whites. Since the early 1960s, the ratio of the jobless rate of black youth to white youth has risen. In 1988, the unemployment rate of black youth was 2.3 times the rate for whites and five times the rate for adults.

Marriage and Childbearing

For a variety of social and economic reasons, youth are marrying much later in life. Now, almost half wait until they are 25 years old or older to marry—up from a median age at marriage of 21 years in the late 1950s. Only three of every ten 20 to 24-year-old women were unmarried in 1960. By 1988, six of every ten were single.

Reflecting the reduced marriage pattern and a strong trend to later and fewer children, there are relatively fewer young mothers. Births to women under 25 are at less than half the 1960 rate, with the entire reduction among married women. Out-of-wedlock births to young white women have risen. As a result, more than half of all births to teenagers are out-of-wedlock—153,000 to white teens, 128,000 to black teens, and 9,000 to others in 1986—and nearly one-fourth of 20 to 24-year-old mothers were unmarried, compared to 15 percent in 1960.

Young Families

Delaying marriage and childbearing means that relatively fewer youth are responsible for families today. Largely because of the high proportion of unwed young mothers, however, youths' families often are financially distressed. Of the 2.9 million family households maintained by youth, nearly 30 percent had money incomes below the official poverty level in 1987, almost triple the 11 percent poverty rate for all families. In 1987, 70 percent of family households maintained by women under 25 years of age were in poverty. Exclusive of these women and their children, the poverty rate for youths' families was only marginally higher than the rate for all families.

Problem Areas and Risks

Most of today's youth enjoy good health, and, as a group, they are likely to live longer than any earlier generation of Americans. Deaths among youth are most frequently due to accidents, with much less than half the total due to homicides, suicides, cancer, and other natural causes.

Many youth engage in potentially health-damaging behaviors, including smoking, drinking, and drug abuse. The fraction of youth practicing these risky behaviors peaked during the late 1970s and has diminished significantly since then. Nonetheless, too many of the nation's young still drift into such problem behaviors.

Youth are the segment of the population most likely to be victimized by a criminal, most likely to commit a crime, most likely to be arrested, and, after their early 20s, most likely to be imprisoned for committing a crime. More than one of every six 16 to 24-year-olds were victimized during 1987. Although these were mostly thefts, there were about 2.2 million completed or attempted violent crimes against youth—almost one-third of these young victims sustained physical injury and six percent required hospitalization.

Summary

The picture that emerges from the overall averages suggests that an increasing share of our nation's youth are moving in positive directions. Decreasing rates of alcohol and drug abuse, increasing education and labor force participation of young women, and the overall reduction in teen parenting provide reason for cautious optimism. Still, there is no room for complacency. Out-of-wedlock childbearing has risen, young men are not recording the same levels of college attendance and completion that they were a decade ago, and far too many youth are drawn to alcohol and drug abuse.

• • •

This statistical snapshot was prepared by **James R. Wetzel,** *serving as a private consultant to the Commission staff. He was assisted in the preparation of the report by his teenage daughter, Katharine. While remaining solely responsible for errors of fact or interpretation, Mr. Wetzel wishes to thank Samuel Halperin, Atelia Melaville, and Lynda Tredway for useful suggestions on the entire manuscript and Janet Gans, of the American Medical Association, for her contributions in the preparation of the Health chapter.*

Demographic Trends

Childbearing in the United States surged to record highs soon after World War II drew to a close. From 2.6 million in 1940, births increased progressively to a peak of 4.3 million in 1957 and remained above four million through 1964.[1] The more than 75 million persons born during these high-fertility years often are called the Baby Boom generation.

Because of their large number, the Baby Boomers have had widespread impacts. During their early years, resources were extensively redeployed to nurture and educate them. They swamped existing school systems, and their parents helped speed suburban development, necessitating substantial investments in public facilities such as schools, roads, and water/sewage facilities. As they reached adolescence, their numbers, tastes, and buying power dramatically shifted consumer spending patterns. They revolutionized the entertainment industry, dress styles, and social behavior. The Baby Boomers entered the labor force in record numbers beginning in the late 1960s, providing unprecedented growth of the labor supply. Collectively, they experienced high unemployment and slow growth of real earnings from the early 1970s through the middle 1980s.[2]

Now, of course, the Baby Boomers are no longer youth. Those born immediately after World War II are in their 40s, and those born in the early 1960s are in their late 20s. As this large generation moves through its prime working and childrearing years, it is appropriate to reflect on the circumstances, behaviors, and prospects of the current generation of young Americans.

TODAY'S YOUTH

Childbearing declined steadily after 1964, reaching a low of 3.1 million births in 1973. Because of the drop of more than one-fourth in annual births, those born after 1964 often are called the Baby Bust generation. **Today's 15 to 24-year-olds** were born between 1965 and 1974—numbering about 37 million, they **are drawn entirely from the Baby Bust generation.** This generation will have different effects on our economy and society, both because it is much smaller and because of the huge generation that preceded it. In some cases, such as the availability of higher education slots, they are benefiting as their predecessors move on and leave behind an educational system with substantial excess capacity. Also, in some states, entry-level job opportunities now are readily available as **the number of youth moving into the workforce continues to fall sharply below the level of only a decade ago.** Beyond entry jobs, however, today's youth still face clogged career ladders and highly competitive economic conditions.

Smaller size is not the only important feature of the Baby Bust generation. They were raised in an affluent, but slowly growing, economy that weathered, in 1982–83, the most severe economic contraction and the highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression. Surveys suggest that they have quite different attitudes, behaviors, and expectations than their predecessors of the 1960s. In particular, **they are less likely to engage in political activities, and they express more concern about their personal economic future.**[3]

RISING LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy of Americans has risen progressively since the turn of the century. As Chart 1 shows, **life expectancy is greater, and has risen more, for young women than for young men.** The gap in life expectancy between whites and blacks has narrowed considerably since the turn of the century, but it remains comparatively large. At age 20, the remaining life expectancy of a white woman was 60 years in 1986, up more than one-third from 1900. Black 20-year-old women had an expectancy of about 56 additional years in 1986, half again the 37 years of 1900. At twenty years of age, black and white men had remaining life expectancies in 1900 of only 35 and 42 years, respectively. By 1986, their life expectancies had risen to about 49 additional years for black men and 53.6 years for whites.[4]

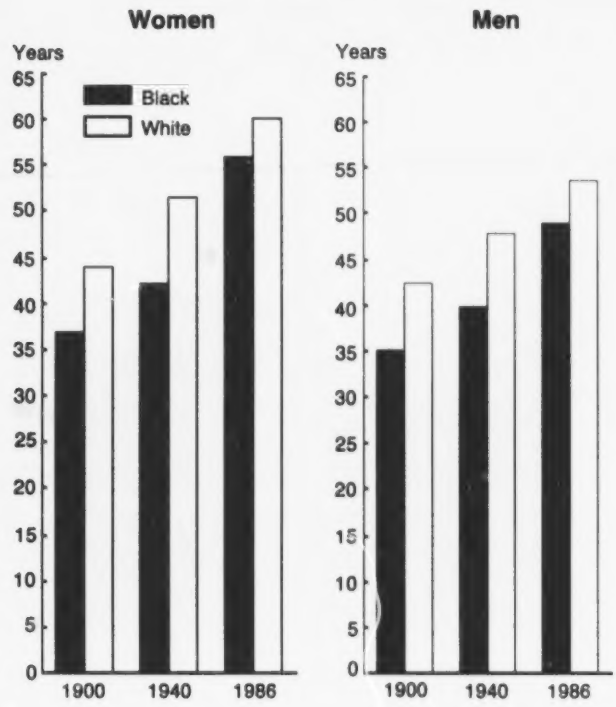
OUR DECLINING YOUTH POPULATION

Our youth population began to shrink in 1980 as the late Baby Boomers reached age 25 and were replaced by much smaller cohorts of the Baby Bust era. The number of 15 to 24-year-old Americans fell from a peak of almost 43 million to about 37 million early in 1989, plummeting 13 percent in less than a decade. As is illustrated in Chart 2, their total number **is projected to decline to 35.0 million in 1995, a drop of 7.7 million or 18 percent from 1980.**[5] This projection has a high degree of certainty, since those who will turn 15 by the year 2003 have already been born. The only variances will arise from fluctuations in net immigration and unforeseeable changes in mortality.

With almost eight million fewer young men and women in 1995 than in 1980, youth's influence on and contribution

Chart 1

Life Expectancy of Youth at Age 20



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, see note 4.

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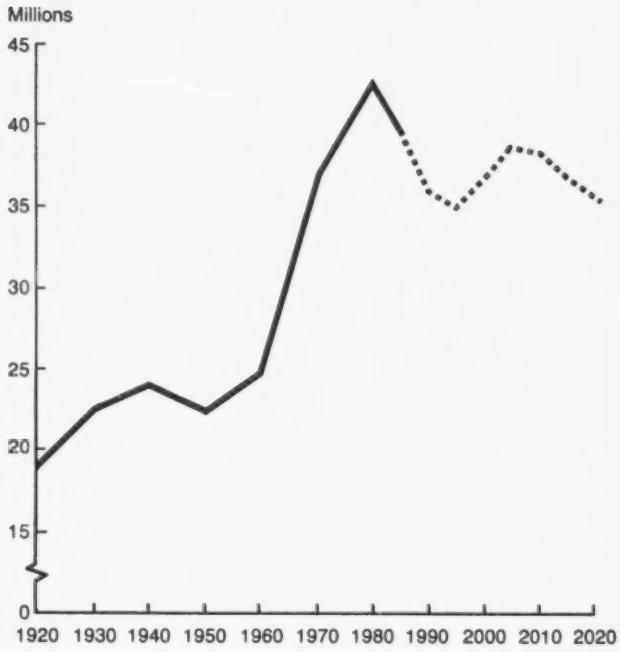
Chart 2

America's Youth Population: 1920-2020



Source: Census Bureau, see note 5.

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to our economy and society unquestionable will differ from that with which we are familiar. **Youth now constitute only 15 percent of the total population, down from 18.8 percent in 1980.** Because of their dwindling numbers, the proportion **will continue to fall, reaching a low of 13.5 percent in 1995.** These falling numbers portend significantly different patterns in labor markets, education, the Armed Forces, and consumer markets. Indeed, some change is already obvious in major areas of public concern, such as the reduced pressure on the capacity of the nation's school systems.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In addition to declining in proportion to the nation's total population, ongoing changes in the race and ethnic composition of the youth population will result in much greater representation of minorities.

Like whites, **the absolute number of young blacks is declining.** However, relative to their fraction of the population, they are not declining nearly as rapidly. At present, there are about 5.55 million black youth, down from almost six million in 1980. Their number is projected to drop to 5.4 million in 1990, and remain near that level through 1995. **Because of a relatively slower rate of decline, their proportion of the total youth population should rise to 15.3 percent in 1995, from 13.7 percent in 1980** and about 11 percent in 1960. As discussed later, black youth continue to experience high levels of joblessness and are not expanding their participation in higher education. Both circumstances bode ill for the acquisition of adequate training and experience to achieve a high personal standard of living and to help reassert our international competitiveness.

Unlike whites and blacks, **the number of Hispanic[6] youth—who may be of any race—is estimated to have increased about 14 percent during the early 1980s,** rising from 3.2 million (7.5 percent of the total) in 1980 to almost 3.7 million (ten percent in 1988.[7]) At the time of the 1980 Census, about **29 percent of Hispanic 15 to 24-year-olds were foreign born,** and that proportion may have increased since then, owing to continued high immigration. As discussed in more detail later, Hispanic immigrant youth tend to have much lower levels of schooling than native-born

youth, a background that leaves many under-qualified for the most basic requirements of tomorrow's jobs.

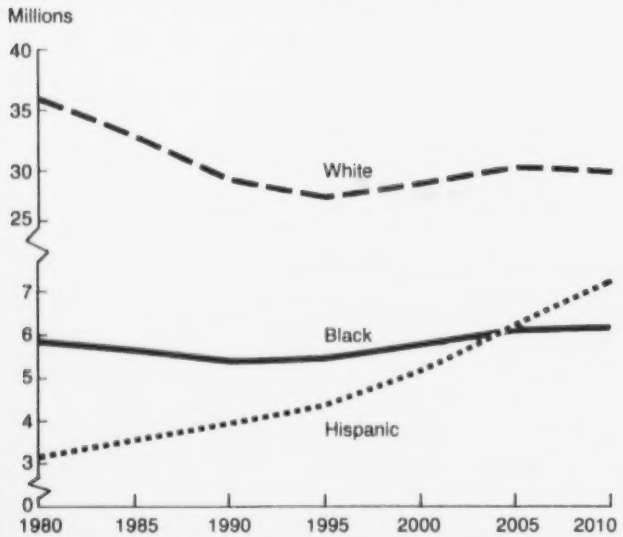
Because small populations cannot be accurately measured in most sample surveys, reliable annual estimates are not available for Native Americans and Asian and Pacific Islanders. However, taken together, **Native American and Asian and Pacific Islander youth are estimated to have increased about seven percent between 1980 and 1988,** following large gains during the 1970s. The total Asian and Pacific Islander population in the United States, for example, more than doubled its 1970 level over the decade, reaching 3.5 million in 1980. Post-Vietnam War resettlement of Vietnamese and Cambodians, and continued migration from the Philippines and Korea, were instrumental in the large gain. **Asian and Pacific Islander youth** numbered almost 645,000 in 1980, or **1.5 percent of the nation's youth.** Between 1970 and 1980, the Native American population (American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts) in the United States more than doubled to 1.4 million, but much of the increase was a result of improved reporting of nativity. **Native American youth totaled 343,900 in 1980, or about 0.8 percent of all U.S. youth.**[8]

GROWTH OF MINORITIES

By the middle 1990s, more than 30 percent of the nation's youth are projected to be from minority groups. That represents an increase of nearly one-third from their estimated 23 percent in 1980. More than **15 percent of all youth will be black, about 4.5 percent Native American and Asian and Pacific Islander,** and, perhaps, **12 percent Hispanic** in 1995.[9] Regardless of age, members of most minority groups experience higher unemployment, earn lower incomes, and reach lower levels of education attainment than native-born whites.

Chart 3

Projections of America's Youth Population



Source: Census Bureau, see note 9.

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IMMIGRANTS

We live in an increasingly heterogeneous nation. During the 1970s, at least 4.5 million legal immigrants moved to the United States. That was about two million more than during the 1950s, and the largest number for any decade since 1911–20. As a consequence, **by 1980, almost one out of every twenty American youth was foreign born.** Recent immigrants are drawn mainly from the less developed areas of Asia, the Caribbean, and Mexico, where citizens lack the educational and other opportunities that are common in the United States.[10] Any assessment of the status and prospects of the Baby Bust generation must take into account the characteristics of young immigrants from less developed countries. Data on their educational and socioeconomic circumstances are limited, but the 1980 Census of Population made these facts clear:[11]

Of those who immigrated during the 1970s, 1.35 million were 15 to 24 years of age in 1980. About half of these youth were from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. About 360,000 were from Asia.

*In April 1980, **640,000 persons between the ages of 5 and 17** (making them 14 to 26 years of age in April 1989) **reported that they spoke English poorly or not at all.** About two-thirds spoke Spanish at home.*

*The education gap for young immigrants often is large. **Only 21.5 percent of 18 to 24 year-old Mexican immigrants had completed high school** and 1.1 percent had completed college. By contrast, native-born 18 to 24-year-olds already had high school and college completion rates of 76.9 and 6.4 percent, respectively.*

Immigrant flows from the less-developed nations have continued strong. Recently, for example, nearly 875,000 youth, mostly from Mexico and the Caribbean, have applied for resident status under the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.[12] As a result, **for the foreseeable future, many American youth will not have had the benefit of the United States education or health care systems.**

MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

Youth are at the most mobile stage of the lifecycle. Leaving the parental home to form an independent non-

family household, to marry and establish a family household, or to take a job in another locale are among the reasons that young adults are the nation's most frequent movers. Moving accelerates in the late teens, peaks at about age 25, and continues high into the early 30s. Between March 1985 and 1986, for example, 37 percent of all 25-year-olds moved. That compares with rates of 19 percent at age 35 and 15 percent at age 15. **Over the 1980–1985 period, more than six out of every ten 20 to 24-year-olds moved, half again the rate for the overall population.** Most movement of youth results in the establishment of new households in the same county as their last home, while migration between states is about the same as the general population.[13]

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

On a state-by-state basis, 18 to 24-year-old youth constitute from 10 to 12.2 percent of state populations.[14] In part reflecting higher birth rates, percentages are highest in southern states like Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. Lower proportions are found in states with high percentages of their population in the post-childbearing years, such as Florida and Idaho.

Geographic distributions of minorities are skewed. Relatively more black youth live in the South, while Asians and Pacific Islanders are heavily concentrated in the West, especially in Hawaii and California. Native Americans and Hispanics are concentrated in the Southwest and West. Hispanics outside the Southwest are most concentrated in Florida and in large northern cities, such as Chicago and New York.

Like the total population, about two-thirds of all youth live in metropolitan areas, including 28 percent who are residents of central cities. Young whites show a close correspondence to the overall distribution. Black youth, by contrast, are disproportionately concentrated in central cities and under-represented in the suburban ring: **56 percent of black youth live in central cities and only 23 percent in the suburbs,** while only 23 percent of young whites live in the central cities and 43 percent live in the suburbs.

Residential patterns often limit the opportunities of young blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities to be competitive in our society and our economy. Minority youth are much more likely than whites to live in poverty areas characterized by high dropout rates, limited job opportunities, common drug use, and high street crime rates. **Opportunities for good education, personal growth, and economic participation are curtailed in such circumstances.** In large central cities, for example, justifiable fear of street crime constrains attendance at night school and limits the range of jobs to those with little or no evening work.

BARRIERS TO ACCOMPLISHMENT

Any assessment of the progress of youth and their prospects as adults must take into account the fact that a small, but significant, minority do not have the intellectual or physical capacity to participate fully. We have no direct evidence on the proportion of youngsters of any given age who are so severely impaired that they are unable to participate effectively in education, work, or various social activities. However, there are some indicative data.

At any given time, approximately 0.2 percent of youth are confined to institutions for the mentally disturbed or acutely physically handicapped. Of the nation's noninstitutionalized youth, one of every 20 has difficulty performing one or more basic physical activities, such as seeing, hearing, walking, or speaking. **Almost one of every 100 has a severe disability; that is, they could not perform the activity at all or could only perform it with help from another person.**[15] Functional limitations often translate into difficulty in finding or holding a job. About one of every 25 noninstitutionalized youth report some form of work limiting disability, and **seventeen of every 1,000 have a condition that severely limits some types of work activity.** As shown in the table below, young men report higher rates of work disability.

WORK DISABILITY AMONG YOUTH: 1988
(in thousands)

	Total	Men	Women
Total, ages 16 to 24	33,453	16,612	16,841
With a limitation:			
Number	1,285	674	610
Percent	3.8	4.1	3.6
With a severe limitation:			
Number	577	312	265
Percent	1.7	1.9	1.6

Source: Bureau of Census, *Labor Force Status of Persons with a Work Disability: 1981 to 1988*, Series P-60, Number 169 (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 16–19

Notes

1. Census Bureau, *Estimates of the Population and Components of Change: 1940–78*, Series P-25, Number 802, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1979) p. 8

2. F. Levy, *Dollars and Dreams*, (Russell Sage Foundation, New York: 1987) pp. 79–82, 123–126, 157–160

3. National Center For Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 1988*, Series CS 88-600, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 332–334
4. Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States to 1970*, Part 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1975) p. 56 and *Projections of the Population of the United States: 1988 to 2080*, Series P-25, Number 1018, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 143
5. Census Bureau, *Projections of the Population of the United States: 1988 to 2080*, Series P-25, Number 1018, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 42–86
6. Because "Hispanic" is an ethnic identifier, Hispanic persons may be from any race group. Hispanics who reported in one of the four race categories in the 1980 Census classified themselves as 92.5 percent white, 4.5 percent black, 1.9 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and 1.1 percent Native American. Census Bureau, *1980 Census, Detailed Population Characteristics: U.S. Summary*, PC80-1-D1-A, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1984) p. 68
7. Census Bureau, *Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1988*, Series P-20, Number 431, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 7–9
8. Census Bureau, *1980 Census, Detailed Population Characteristics: U.S. Summary*, PC80-1-D1-A, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1984) p. 7
9. Census Bureau, *Projections of the Population of the United States: 1988 to 2080*, Series P-25, Number 1018, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 47–53 and *Projections of the Spanish Origin Population of the United States: 1983 to 2080*, Series P-25, Number 995, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 31, 47–51
10. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1989*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 9–17
11. Census Bureau, *1980 Census: Detailed Population Characteristics: U.S. Summary*, PC80-1-D1-A, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1984) pp. 7–20
12. Immigration and Naturalization Service, "Provisional Legalization Application Statistics," January 1989, pp. 3–4
13. L. Long, *Migration and Residential Mobility in the United States*, (Russell Sage Foundation, New York: 1988) and Census Bureau, *Geographical Mobility: 1980–85*, Series P-20, Number 1008, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1987) pp. 51–56 and *Geographical Mobility: March 1985 to March 1986*, Series P-20, Number 425, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 12–16
14. Census Bureau, *State Population and Household Estimates, With Age, Sex, and Components of Change: 1981–87*, Series P-25, Number 1024, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 4, 81
15. Census Bureau, *Disability, Functional Limitation and Health Insurance Coverage: 1984–85*, Series P-70, Number 8, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 11–18

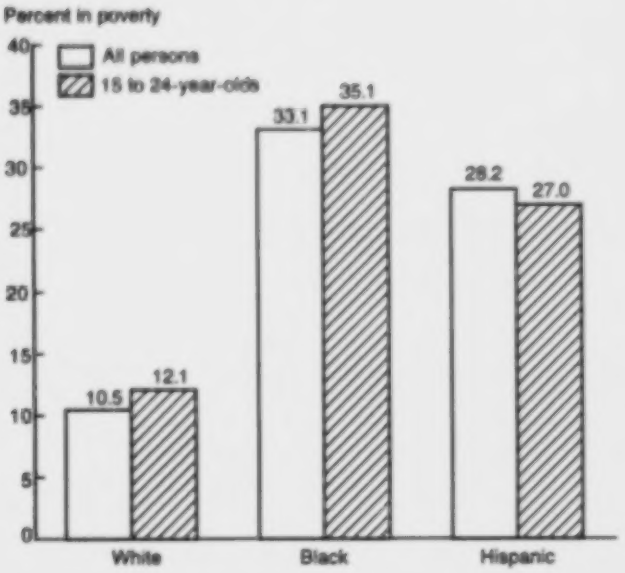
Living Arrangements and Economic Status

Young Americans are taking more time to complete the transition from adolescent dependency to adult independence than did their immediate predecessors. In 1988, 54 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds still lived in their parents' home, up more than one-fourth from 43 percent in 1960. The time invested in college education is one important factor in the increasing propensity of youth to remain in the parental home till older ages. Economic trends that appear to have contributed to the stay-at-home-longer pattern include outright declines in their real earnings, higher unemployment, and the steep rise of home costs relative to their average incomes.

As youth undertake the physical, emotional, and intellectual tasks attendant to accomplishing a constructive adulthood, their prospects for a smooth, successful transition are strongly influenced by their socioeconomic circumstances. Living at home or away, living with one parent or both, and, particularly, the adequacy of income to provide the necessities of life are significant factors in the success rate. In 1987, 15.7 percent of our youth were living in poverty. Being poor is associated with lower rates of school completion, higher out-of-wedlock birth rates, and higher rates of deviant behavior. As shown in Chart 4, minority youth experience much higher poverty rates than whites—almost triple for blacks and more than double for Hispanics.

Chart 4

Poverty Rates of Youth By Race/Ethnicity: 1987



Source: Census Bureau, see note 21.

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Despite the longer period of dependency, the transition to independent living is a comparatively orderly process leading to a constructive and participatory middle-class lifestyle for the majority of youth. A sizable minority, however, depart from the parental home at younger ages, often taking the first step into a low-income, limited opportunity lifestyle. Young runaways, "throwaways," and homeless youth are of particular concern. Because of the harshness of street life, many runaways return home. However, for those cast out or set adrift by abandonment, parental death, or imprisonment, life is hard and the prospects of an adequate education and a middle-class standard of living are slim. We do not have separate information that applies just to them, but it is highly likely that they experience the lowest incomes and most insecure living arrangements.

As we demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, those living with both parents are much less likely to be poor than those living with their mothers in a single-parent home, while those living away from home are most likely to have poverty level incomes. Poverty is endemic among young unwed mothers, whose circumstances are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

LIVING AT HOME

A sizable majority of youth under age 22 live with their parents in a family household. As one might expect, students are particularly likely to remain in the parental home, owing to the financial requirements of postsecondary education (college students living in dormitories are classified as living at home) and their more limited opportunities for work. Increasingly, however, nonstudents seem to be remaining in the parental home for longer periods as well. In 1960, only 35 percent of 18 to 24-year-old women and 52 percent of young men resided in their parents' homes. Those proportions rose gradually to 43 and 54 percent, respectively, in 1980, then accelerated sharply during the 1980s to reach levels of 60 percent of the young men and almost half of the young women still living at home in 1988.[16]

PATTERNS BY AGE

Almost 96 percent of our nation's 15 to 17-year-olds live with one or both parents in a family household: about 71 percent with both parents; 21 percent with their mother; and 3.6 percent with their father. The few remaining teens usually live with their grandparents or other relatives. The overall poverty rate for high school age youngsters was 16.6 percent in 1987. The 2.4 million living in a single-parent home with their mothers are much more likely to be poor—almost 40 percent in 1987—than those in a married couple household—almost 8 percent. For the small number living away from the parental home—374,000—poverty often is a fact of life; almost six of every ten had poverty level incomes in 1987.[17]

POVERTY STATUS BY AGE: 1987

Living Arrangements	Ages 15–17	Ages 18–21	Ages 22–24
Total, in thousands	10,775	14,327	11,734
Percent in poverty	16.6	16.0	14.4
Living with both parents*	8,049	8,449	3,596
Percent in poverty	7.8	4.6	4.4
Living with mother only	2,352	2,369	1,147
Percent in poverty	39.9	25.6	17.2
Living away from parents	374	3,511	6,991
Percent in poverty	58.3	37.0	19.2

*Includes a small number living with their father in a single-parent home.

Source: Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 1987*, Series P-60, Number 163, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 29–31

By ages 18 to 21, youth are somewhat more likely to be on their own, but more than three-fourths (10.8 of 14.3 million) are still living in the parental home. For this college-age group, the overall poverty rate was 16 percent in 1987. Of the 10.8 million still living at home, about three-fourths live with both parents and about 22 percent are in a single-parent home with their mother. Poverty rates are lowest for those living with both parents—4.6 percent; higher for those living with mothers only in a single-parent home—25.6 percent; and highest for the 3.5 million living on their own—37 percent.

At ages 22 through 24, about 40 percent of youth are living in the parental home. Those who reside with both parents or with their fathers in a single-parent home had a poverty rate of only 4.4 percent in 1987, while those living with their mothers in a single-parent family had a poverty rate of 17.2 percent. At these ages, many have completed their education and moved into career jobs. For these young adults, the transition is essentially complete, and few are living in poverty. However, for those with low educational attainment—many of whom have been away from home for years—poverty rates continue to be high.

LABOR FORCE BEHAVIOR

Regardless of age, youth living with both parents or with their father only, are less likely to be living in poverty than their peers who live with their mother in a single-parent family. Somewhat more surprising is the finding that this pattern applies to youth's work activity as well. As shown in the table below, the five million youth living in a single-parent home with their mothers are somewhat less likely to be in the workforce and much more likely to be jobless than those living with both parents or in a single-parent home with their father.

YOUTH LIVING WITH PARENTS: 1988
(in thousands)

Family Type	Number	Percent: In labor force	Jobless
Ages 16 to 19 years:			
In married-couple families	9,486	55.6	12.7
In female-headed families	3,004	49.0	24.0
In male-headed families	615	56.3	19.6
Ages 20 to 24 years:			
In married-couple families	6,316	77.5	8.8
In female-headed families	2,076	75.3	16.1
In male-headed families	615	78.4	10.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) p. 170

YOUTH MAINTAINING HOUSEHOLDS

More than **five million youth (about one out of every eight) were maintaining households in March 1988.** About 2.9 million were responsible for family households—two or more people related by marriage or blood living together in a separate dwelling unit, and 2.3 million were maintaining nonfamily households—a person living alone or sharing a living unit with unrelated persons.

Of the 5.2 million households of youth, about 4.4 million were rented and roughly 800,000—15 percent—were owned

or being purchased by the occupants. The latest year for which detailed information on housing characteristics and costs are available is 1985. In that year, median rental housing cost for young married couples was $362, or one-fourth of their family income and a shade more than the average for all renting households.

The value of dwelling units owned by young married couples was about $35,000 compared to $67,000 for all owners. Housing costs absorbed 21 percent of their family income compared to an average of 14 percent for all married couple owners.[18]

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

The 2.9 million family households maintained by a person less than 25 years of age account for about one of every 20 family households in the United States. The family households of young Americans divide almost equally into three categories: childless married couples; married couples with children; and families comprised of a single parent, usually a woman, with one or more children. The latter group is discussed in Chapter 5.

Only a small fraction of youth earn enough to support a family adequately. In fact, **youth's families have to get along on about half the average income for all families ($18,696 versus $36,568 in 1987).** Only about 14 percent of family households maintained by youth had incomes in excess of $30,000; in most cases, that was a function of two workers bringing in pay checks.[19] The steady rise in working wives, whether mothers or not, demonstrates that the desired level of living of young Americans usually cannot be achieved by the efforts of a single earner.

MARRIED COUPLES

In March 1988, almost 900,000 family households of youth were comprised of childless couples. In the majority of these households, both husband and wife work, and their family income is at the high end of the earnings range for their age group.

Slightly over 900,000 young married couples were maintaining family households with children present. In all, they had a total of 1.3 million children. Wives in these households are slightly less likely to work, and family incomes are somewhat lower than for childless households. Back in 1960, almost two-thirds of young married couple households had young children.

The income of husband-wife families is mostly from earnings and varies with the work activity of the wife in the same general manner as older families. Thus, annual incomes are highest in married-couple families in which the wife works full-time—averaging $28,356 in 1987—and are lowest in families in which the wife was not in the labor force—$17,131. Between the extremes were families in which the wife worked part-time—$20,682—and families in which the wife was unemployed—$18,190.[20]

As illustrated in the table below, **there is little difference in the annual income of young white and black married couple families.** Indeed, black married-couple families in which the wife was employed reported average annual income of $27,550 in 1987, slightly more than for white families. However, only one-fifth of young black families are in this category compared to two-fifths of white families.

INCOME OF MARRIED COUPLES: 1987
(15 to 24 years of age)

Family type	Total	Whites	Blacks
Number, in thousands	1,807	1,613	154
Average income	$23,081	$22,931	$23,594
Wife employed	26,539	26,395	27,550
Wife unemployed	18,190	18,225	na
Wife not in labor force	17,131	17,079	na

Source: Census Bureau, *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1987*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) Series P-60, Number 162, pp. 61–69

POVERTY AMONG MARRIED COUPLES

Of the 1.8 million married-couple family households maintained by youth, only **12.4 percent had money incomes below the official poverty level in 1987.** That compares with a poverty rate of 10.8 percent for all families. Young white families accounted for the bulk of the married couple poverty count—198,000 out of 224,000 families in poverty. Their rate, at 12.3 percent, was slightly less than that of young black married couple families—15.8 percent.[21]

The nearly 900,000 **young married couples without children had a poverty rate of only six percent** in 1987, while those with children experienced a rate of 18.4 percent. These poverty families included about 300,000 children, most of them below six years of age. As shown in Chapter 5, the problem of poverty in young families is concentrated among single mothers attempting to care for their children without the help of their children's fathers.

TRENDS AND ATTITUDES

In 1960, more than half of all of 18 to 24-year-old women were married and living in a family household. That proportion dropped to about 30 percent of the total of 1988. Over the same period, the percentage of young men maintaining family households was cut in half, dropping from 31.6 percent of all young men in 1960 to 15.4 percent in 1988.[22]

Had young women continued to marry and be part of family households at the 1960 rate, the number of wives in such households would have been 6.8 million in 1988 rather than the actual total of four million. Had young men continued to marry and establish family households at the 1960 rate, the number of family households headed by young men would have been 4.1 million in 1988, rather than the actual total of two million.

Of the youth who are married, many fewer have children than was the case in the past. In general, young Americans show a strong preference for small families. More than half of all women under age 25 indicate a preference for two children, 12 percent prefer one, and ten percent plan to remain childless. Thus, almost three-fourths of today's young women prefer a family of two or fewer children. By contrast, only 40 percent of the wives in the same age group wanted a family that small and only seven percent planned to remain childless in 1967, when comprehensive birth expectations data were first collected by the federal government. By 1967, of course, the decline in fertility was already well under way. If we had birth expectations data for the late 1950s, the preferred norm probably would have been about three children. As late as the middle 1960s, there were 3.1 children per married woman. By 1976, the number had fallen to 2.3 per married woman, and it has been comparatively stable since then. In 1987, the figure was 2.2 children per married woman.[23]

LIVING IN NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

As the Baby Boom generation matured, it became increasingly common for youth to set up their own households while they were still single. In 1960, only 2.2 percent of 18 to 24-year-old women and 2.7 percent of young men maintained independent nonfamily households. Those proportions almost quadrupled by 1980, when they stood at 8.1 percent for young women and 11.1 percent for young men. More than half of all nonfamily households maintained by youth are comprised of persons living alone. The number of youth doing so doubled between 1960 and 1970, then tripled between 1970 and 1980 to a level of 1.7 million. **Since 1980, the number of youth living alone has declined by 450,000, a cumulative drop of 26 percent in only eight years.** The decline in the total number of youth was only half as much—13 percent.

As a result of the decline in the number of youth living alone, **the proportion of young men maintaining nonfamily households dropped about one-eighth**—from 11.1 to 9.8 percent of their total, and the proportion of **young women in that status declined marginally**—from 8.1 to 7.7 percent of their population.[24]

Even with the sharp decline, the number of nonfamily households maintained by persons less than 25 years of age totaled 2.3 million in 1988 (1.3 million maintained by men). The average money income of such households was $16,644 in 1987, significantly less than the $23,081 for young husband-wife family households, which often have two earners.

UNMARRIED COUPLES

In all, 2.1 million young women were living in nonfamily households in March 1988; one million maintained such households, usually alone. About 1.1 million lived with nonrelatives, usually as a member of an unmarried couple household. This living arrangement increased sixfold in the United States between 1960 and 1988. Young adults are somewhat more likely than other age groups to participate in such arrangements. In 1988, about 740,000 women and 510,000 men under 25 years of age were living in unmarried couple households, usually with a partner in the same general age range.

Living together has become a comparatively common transitional event for young adults. One recent study showed that about one-third of the young adults in their sample had cohabited by age 23.5 years. For young women in this particular study, 40 percent were still unmarried and living with their partner two years after the cohabitation began, while 37 percent had married their partner and 23 percent had dissolved the arrangement.[25]

Notes

16. Census Bureau, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1988*, Series P-20, Number 433, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 9–14, 29–38, 63–64
17. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 1987*, Series P-60, Number 163, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 29–31
18. Census Bureau, *American Housing Survey For the United States: 1985*, Series H-150-85, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 107–110, 156–159
19. Census Bureau, *Earnings in 1987 of Married-Couple Families*, Series P-60, Number 165, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 6, 18–24
20. Census Bureau, *Money Income of Households, Fam-*

ilies and Persons in the United States: 1987, Series P-60, Number 162, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 61–69

21. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 1987*, Series P-60, Number 163, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 29–31, 58–63
22. Census Bureau, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: 1988*, Series P-20, Number 433, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 63
23. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women: June 1988*, Series P-60, Number 165, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 6 and *Previous and Prospective Fertility: 1967*, Series P-20, Number 211, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1974) pp. 13–14
24. Census Bureau, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1988*, Series P-20, Number 433, (USGPO, Washington, DC: 1989) p. 64
25. A. Thornton, "Cohabitation and Marriage in the 1980s," *Demography*, Volume 25, Number 4, November 1988, pp. 497–508

Education

Acquiring the education necessary to earn an adequate living and to participate constructively in our increasingly complex society is a vital and challenging task for today's youth. Explosive growth and rapid application of new technical knowledge are constantly raising minimum job requirments for most types of work, while manual labor needs are declining. In the overall economy, growing international interdependency and the globalization of production pose new challenges and create uncertainties about the future prospects of even the most crucial occupations and the most powerful firms.

Social trends, too, foster greater dependence on education, especially for young women. Young women of the 1950s generally planned on marrying, raising families, and remaining out of the labor market. For the mothers of the current generation, predicating their lives on such assumptions often resulted in unhappy outcomes. The divorce rate soared during the 1960s and 1970s, and many found themselves cast in the role of family breadwinner. Today's young women are well aware that they will have to provide for themselves for some significant period of years, both before and after marriage. Moreover, a majority of wives and mothers now stay in the labor force throughout their childbearing and childrearing years, most because they feel they must work to maintain or achieve the desired standard of living for themselves and their families.

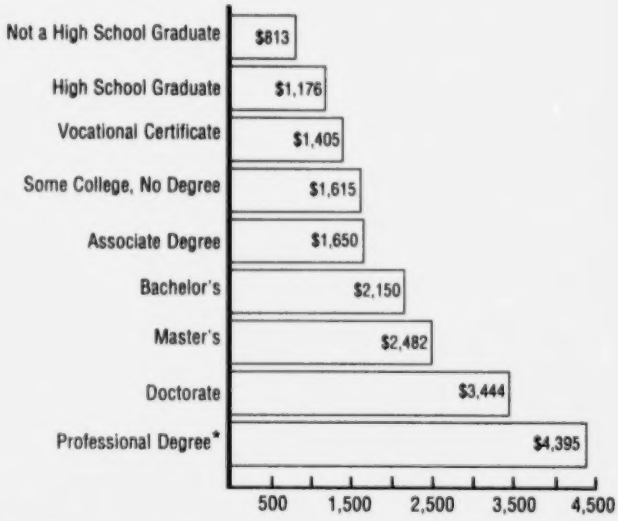
The changing social and economic circumstances of youth also dramatically influence their prospects of achieving the requisite education. School performance, including completing a full program and graduation, and the economic status of the student's family are closely correlated. In short, regardless of race, students from poor families are three to four times more likely to drop out than those from more affluent households. As compared to the 1970s, there has been a rise in the proportion of youth living in poverty, a situation that is inimical to further gains in average educational attainment.

ECONOMIC RETURNS TO EDUCATION

No one can accurately predict the economic return to education for an individual or a group. However, there is overwhelming evidence that those who reach higher levels of education have much higher earnings and incomes than the average. As illustrated in Chart 5, **35 to 44-year-old persons with a bachelor's degree report almost twice the monthly earnings of those who stopped going to school after high school graduation, and almost three times the earnings of those who dropped out before completing high school.** Persons with a professional degree (medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, and the like) reported monthly earnings of $4,400, almost four times the earnings of high school graduates and double the earnings of those who stopped their schooling after completing a four-year degree.[26]

Chart 5

Average Monthly Earnings By Highest Degree: 1984
(Persons 35 to 44 years old)



* Includes medical doctors, dentists, lawyers and the like.

Source: Census Bureau, see note 26.

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BARRIERS TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A small percentage of young people do not have the intellectual or physical capacity to complete, or in some cases even to undertake, a serious scholastic program. About one of every 20 youth has some form of functional limitation, and almost one in every 100 has a severe limitation, and these may contribute to learning difficulties.[27] A large overall scale of learning problems is indicated by widespread use of special student assistance programs.

In 1987, 4.4 million elementary and secondary school students (almost 10 percent of the total) were served by special education for the handicapped programs. **Those being served under the classifications of severely emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, and learning disabled numbered 383,000, 643,000, and 1.9 million, respectively.**[28] Many youngsters in the first two categories have been held back one or more grades and usually test at low achievement levels for their ages.

Also, approximately 0.8 percent of youth are confined to institutions at any given time, including 0.2 percent in institutions for the acutely disabled. About five-sixths of the institutionalized are young men: the vast majority were in prisons, jails, or juvenile correctional facilities.[29] Only about 10 percent of inmates of state juvenile corrections facilities 18 or more years of age have a high school degree, according to a 1987 survey of the characteristics of such inmates.[30]

LONG RANGE TRENDS

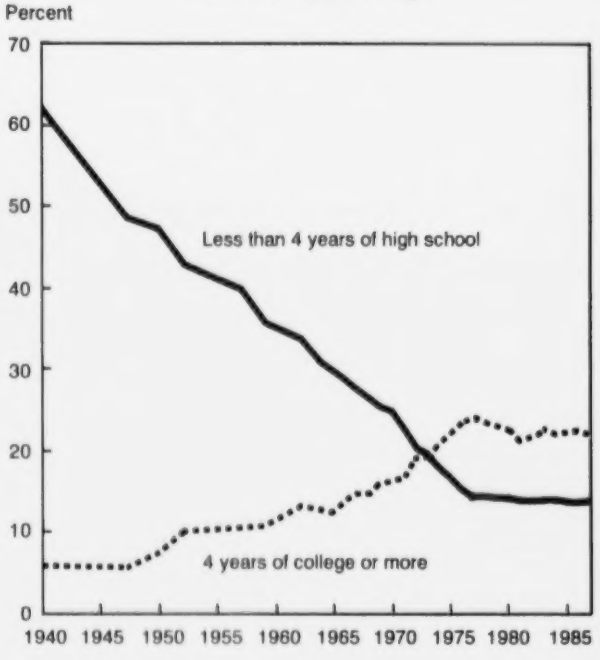
In less than half a century, the likelihood of **young adults completing high school more than doubled,** while the likelihood of **completing four or more years of college almost quadrupled.** The knowledge gained by a larger share of the population has been instrumental in the rapid growth of the economy.[31] Long-term gains in educational attainment among blacks—who started at very low completion rates before World War II—are more dramatic than for whites: the proportions of both high school and college graduates among young blacks have risen sevenfold from 1940.[32]

At present, about 86 percent of 25 to 29-year-olds are high school graduates, compared with proportions of 64 percent in 1959 and only 38 percent in 1940. Since 1975, however, progress on high school completion has slowed. As shown in Chart 6, more than 85 percent of all young adults were high school graduates in 1977, and the ratio has risen only slightly since then. The same pattern applies to postsecondary education. **In 1988, 22 percent of 25 to 29-year-olds had completed four or more years of college, up from 11 percent in 1959 and 6 percent in 1940.** However, in 1977, 24 percent of 25 to 29-year-olds had completed four or more years of college, a level significantly higher than recent averages.

Gains in educational attainment are widespread by race, ethnic group, and gender. Nevertheless, substantial gaps remain between whites and blacks, and non-Hispanics and Hispanics. Before attempting a college education, of course, youth must complete a conventional elementary and secondary program, or earn a GED. The gaps in college attendance by race and ethnicity start at the high school level or before, as some youth fail to complete a conventional program.

Chart 6

Years of School Completed by Persons 25 to 29 Years of Age



Source: Census Bureau, see note 32.

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HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

The high school completion rate of young adults rose steadily from the end of World War II until the late 1970s, then leveled off at about 86 percent of the eligible population. Completion rates have fallen slightly among whites since the early 1980s, and risen for blacks. As of March 1987, 86 percent of all 25 to 29-year-olds had completed at least a high school education: 86.3 percent of whites; 83.4 percent of blacks; and about 60 percent of Hispanics.

The high school completion rate of 25 to 29-year-old white men eroded gradually after the late 1970s. In 1977, the percentage with diplomas reached an all-time high of 87.6 percent. Since then, it has moved unevenly lower. In March 1987, it stood at 85.6 percent. In contrast, educational attainment levels of white women have continued to rise, albeit at a much slower pace than earlier in the post World War II period. At 87 percent in 1987, the percentage of young adult women (25–29 years of age) with diplomas was up a full percentage point from 1977. Like white women, the high school completion rates of both black men and black women have continued to rise

but, as is shown in the table on dropouts, a signficant gap remains.

CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT PATTERNS

The vast majority of adolescents are enrolled in high school, though the percentage enrolled declines noticeably at age 16. As the following table shows, enrollment rates are somewhat lower for Hispanic youth after age 15. Because most Hispanics are white, the lower high school enrollment rate for whites partly reflects the increased weight of Hispanics. Also, however, the lower rate reflects earlier graduation ages. Indeed, almost three percent of 16–17-year-old white youth are enrolled in college compared to about 1.5 percent of blacks. **The strong commitment of some minority youth to completing high school is underscored by the fact that, among Hispanics and blacks, nearly one-fifth of 18–19-year-olds and approximately 2.7 percent of 20 and 21-year-olds still are enrolled in secondary school.**

YOUTH ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL: 1986
(percent of age group enrolled)

Age	Total	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
14–15 years	97.4	97.6	96.4	96.0
16–17 years	89.5	89.1	91.6	82.3
18–19 years	13.1	11.5	20.1	18.4
20–21 years	1.2	0.9	2.8	2.6

Source: Bureau of the Census, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1986*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988), Series P-20, Number 429, pp. 5–7

COMBINING SCHOOL AND WORK

A substantial majority of the nation's students combine school with work, often beginning early in their teens. In December 1988, for example, 75 percent of all 16 to 19-year-olds were students, and 45 percent of those in school were also in the labor force.[33] At this age, most of those in the labor force work part-time for comparatively modest wages. Many are willing to quit their jobs because of school demands. But for the millions of youth living in poverty, the long-range benefits of schooling too often are forgone in favor of near-term income, no matter how modest.

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

In the fall of 1986, **there were 3.7 million 18 to 24-year-olds who had quit school before earning a diploma.** Hispanic youth, some of whom are recent immigrants, made up a disproportionate share of the total. More than one-third of Hispanic youth, about 17 percent of blacks, and 13.5 percent of whites had dropped out. Although black youth outnumber Hispanic youth by about three to two, **there are fewer black (617,000) than Hispanic (865,000) 18 to 24-year-olds who have not finished high school.**[34] Because Hispanics may be of any race, there is some overlap between blacks and Hispanics, but, as noted earlier, most Hispanics are considered white. The proportion of non-Hispanic whites graduating from high school apparently has continued to edge higher.

NO DIPLOMA AND NOT IN SCHOOL: 1986
(percent of age-race group)

Years of Age	Total	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
14–15	2.4	2.2	3.4	3.7
16–17	6.1	6.5	4.7	14.5
18–19	12.3	11.9	14.9	26.8
20–21	14.8	14.3	18.1	34.9
22–24	14.3	13.9	17.3	38.2

Source: Bureau of the Census, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1986*, Series P-20, Number 429, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988), pp. 5–7

As the figures shown in Chart 5 illustrate, dropping out is associated with low earnings later in life. On average, 35 to 44-year-old high school dropouts' monthly income was only about $800, high school graduates earned almost 50 percent more per month, and college graduates earned a healthy $2,150 per month, almost three times as much as the average dropout. As job requirements become evermore technical, dropping out of high school increasingly takes on the character of committing economic suicide.

DROPOUT TRENDS

The news value of high dropout rates, if not the reality, has increased with the nationwide trend toward higher state-enforced minimal standards for student achievement. However, the statistics most often cited in media discussions of the dropout problem—gross dropouts and expulsions—do not measure the "real" dropout problem. The essential statistical problem of assessing school system losses is that one school's dropout may be another school's accession, or a GED "graduate." Thus, local or state reports on gross dropouts may be quite accurate, but a poor indicator of the extent or even the direction of national dropout trends.

A careful analysis of this problem by the Census Bureau's Education and Social Stratification Branch suggests continuing moderate improvements in school retention rates. In October 1973, 638,000 14 to 24-year-olds had been enrolled in school a year earlier, but were not currently

enrolled and had not completed high school. By October 1983, the number of dropouts had fallen by more than one-fifth to 535,000. The school age population also fell, but, taking that decline into account, **the annual dropout rate fell from 6.3 percent in 1973 to 5.2 percent in 1983.**[35]

In 1973, grade-by-grade dropout rates were 5.4 percent for the 10th grade, 6.5 percent for the 11th grade, and 7.1 percent for the 12th grade. For 1983, the rates were down to 3.7 percent, 4.5 percent, and 7.5 percent for the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, respectively. Because the grade-by-grade reduction of dropping out is concentrated in the earlier years of high school, the total school exposure of 1983 dropouts is higher than for 1973 dropouts. This provides a better basis for future school completion by recent dropouts, and, if they do not return to school, they still have greater educational exposure than their predecessors.

The analysis shows a pronounced reduction in the cumulative dropout rate from an estimated 18 percent in 1973 to about 15 percent in 1983. **The improvement was almost entirely among young black men; their estimated cumulative proportion dropping out was reduced from 32 percent in 1973 to about 20 percent in 1983.** The 1973 and 1983 figures for white males were 17 and 15 percent, respectively.

This analysis is supported by the *National Longitudinal Study of High School and Beyond*, which followed the progress of a representative national sample of 1980 high school sophomores over the four following years. In all, 14 percent of the sophomores dropped out of school before graduation, close to the Census estimate of about 15 percent. The study also **demonstrated that the likelihood of dropping out is inversely related to family income.** Thus, youth from lower-income families, who are disproportionately black and Hispanic, still are more likely to drop out of school than white teens, and are less likely to be high school graduates.

A significant minority of high school dropouts eventually earn a high school degree, either by returning to school or by earning a GED. The *High School and Beyond* study revealed that about **one of ten youth that dropped out between the spring of 1980 and the spring of 1982, had returned to school by the fall of 1982.** The likelihood of returning to school was in the same pattern as the likelihood of not dropping out in the first instance. Thus:[36]

Dropouts from higher-income families were more likely to return than those from low-income families.

Returning dropouts were more numerous from student groups with the lowest dropout rates.

Dropouts whose parents were more highly educated, or held professional jobs, were more likely to return than those from less-educated, or blue-collar, families.

Females were more likely to return to school than males.

These statistics and analyses should guide local and national efforts to prevent dropping out and encourage return to school of past dropouts by targeting the most seriously "at risk" populations at an early age. Those who have already dropped out could benefit from school-based outreach programs designed to assist them in finding better jobs and learning practical labor market skills. Such programs would have the dual benefit of increasing their productivity and incomes, while holding open the avenue to a resumption of formal schooling.

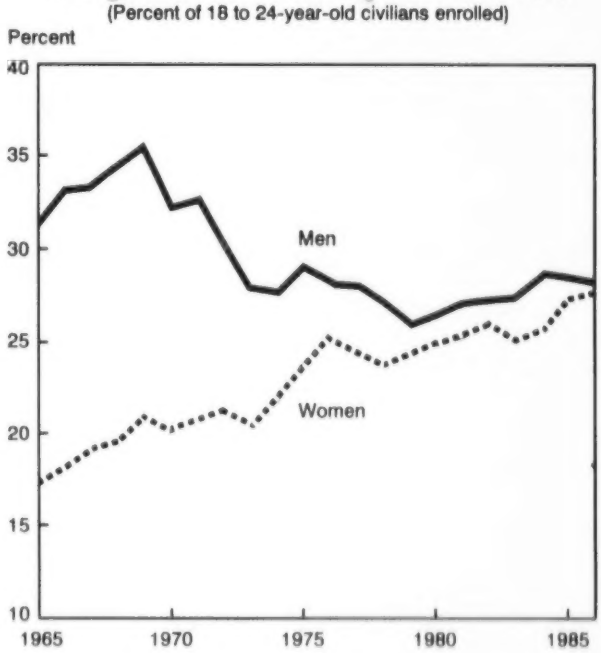
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

From the late 1950s through the early 1970s, the overall proportion of high school graduates enrolled in college rose. The upward trend continued during the 1970s and 1980s for young women. However, **college enrollment rates for young men declined abruptly after the Vietnam war ended,** as is shown in Chart 7. The end of military service deferments based on college attendance produced the initial decline, following a sharp run up in the late 1960s.

Chart 7

College Enrollment Rates By Sex: 1965-1986

(Percent of 18 to 24-year-old civilians enrolled)



Source: Census Bureau, see note 34.

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However, enrollment rates of young men edged marginally lower until the early 1980s, and gains since then have been small.[37] Important factors on the downward trend probably included the sharply rising cost of college attendance, slow income growth for youth's families, outright declines in the "real" incomes that youth could command, and a shortage of jobs for youth during the high unemployment period after 1979.

As a result of these trends, **overall gains in educational attainment over the past two decades have occurred almost entirely among women.** In 1987, 42 percent of female high school graduates in their early twenties reported that they had completed at least one year of postsecondary education, while 44 percent of men that age had done so. The comparable figures for 1968 were 33 percent for women and 42 percent for men. In 1976–77, more than 27 percent of 25 to 29-year-old men had completed four or more years of college. This was the all time high for college completion rates for young men. Since the late 1970s, the college completion rate of young men has drifted lower, averaging a little less than 23 percent for the past three years. Among women, the percent with four or more years of college had risen marginally over the entire period, reaching almost 22 percent in 1986–87. Women appear likely to achieve parity in college graduation rates by the early 1990s.

CURRENT COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

About 28 percent of all civilian 18 to 24-year-old youth (7.4 million) were enrolled in college in the fall of 1986. In recent years, college enrollment rates of 18 and 19-year-old women have been decisively higher than for men that age. Now, as is illustrated in Chart 7, college enrollment rates for 18 to 24-year-old women have moved to within a percentage point of the rate for men.

College attendance rates of whites has always been higher than for blacks. A considerable closure of the enrollment gap took place during the late 1960s and early 1970s—the college participation rate of black 18 to 24-year-olds rose from 13 percent in 1967 to 22.6 percent in 1976, while the rate for whites was about 27 percent in both years. Since then, however, black enrollment has drifted lower, while white enrollment has edged higher. As a result, the gap has widened (21.9 percent for blacks vs 28.3 percent for whites in 1987.)[38] Reliable data for Hispanics is comparatively new; in 1986, Hispanic college enrollment was 17.6, much lower than for non-Hispanic whites and somewhat lower than for blacks.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT BY AGE: 1986
(percent of age group enrolled)

Age	Total	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
16–17 years	2.8	2.9	1.6	1.5
18–19 years	41.5	43.3	29.3	26.9
20–21 years	31.8	32.6	22.9	18.5
22–24 years	17.5	17.1	16.3	12.1
25–29 years	8.5	8.5	6.8	8.0

Source: Bureau of the Census, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1986*, Series P-20, Number 429, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988), pp. 8–12

Notes

26. Census Bureau, *What's it Worth? Educational Background and Economic Status*, Series P-70, Number 11, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1987) p. 9
27. Census Bureau, *Disability, Functional Limitation and Health Insurance Coverage: 1984–85*, Series P-70, Number 8, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) p. 13
28. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest Of Education Statistics: 1988*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 57, 174, 326
29. Census Bureau, *Persons in Institutions and Other Group Quarters*, PC 80-2-4D, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1983) pp. 2–3
30. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Survey of Youth in Custody: 1987*, NCJ-113365, (BJS, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 2–8 and *Children In Custody*, NCJ-102457, (BJS, Washington DC: 1986) p. 2
31. D. O'Neill, *Education In The United States: 1940–1983*, Number CDS-85-1, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1985) pp. 1–28
32. Census Bureau, *Educational Attainment In the United States, March 1987 and 1986*, Series P-20, Number 428, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 3–16, 74–76
33. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 27
34. Census Bureau, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: 1986*, Series P-20, Number 429, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 5–7, 23–26, 90
35. Census Bureau, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: 1983*, Series P-20,

Number 413, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1987) pp. 3–5, 87, 93–95

36. National Center for Education Statistics, *Four Years After High School: A Capsule of 1980 Seniors*, CS 86-210, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 42–44 and *The Condition of Education, 1985 edition*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 209–215
37. Census Bureau, *Educational Attainment in the United States, March 1987 and 1986*, Series P-20, Number 428, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 74–76
38. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest Of Education Statistics: 1988*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 57, 174, 326

Employment, Unemployment, and Earnings

The transition from adolescent dependence to economic self-sufficiency through work has become more problematic and prolonged for today's youth than for any generation since those who came of age during the Great Depression. During 1988, a good year for the overall economy, **the jobless rate of youth averaged 2.6 times the rate for prime-age workers (those aged 25 years or more)—up from a ratio of 2.1 to one in 1950.** Youth have not fared well in the earnings department either. Usual weekly earnings from full-time employment of young men amounted to about 54 percent of the earnings of prime-age men in 1988—down from 74 percent in 1967, when the economy was strong.[39]

The employment and earnings difficulties of youth in the 1970s and early 1980s were partly a result of the sharp rise in the number of youth entering the work force concurrently with some of the nation's most severe economic problems since the 1930s. As the least senior members of the work force, youth experience their best employment prospects during periods when aggregate demand is high and rising and when prime-age workers are in short supply. Conversely, they are particularly vulnerable to the exigencies of slack demand and slow economic growth. Consequently, the deep and prolonged economic contractions of the early 1980s were particularly harsh on young people.

Social conditions, including family formation and dissolution patterns and rising educational requirements for most jobs, also strongly influence the transition to permanent jobs. In particular, young women's relationship to the world of work is dramatically different than that of their mothers. **Many more enter the labor force now, they do so at an earlier age, and most intend to work indefinitely.** That was not true of young women 30 years ago; the primary activity of nonstudent young women in the late 1950s was more likely to be keeping house and caring for a family. **Today's youth enter the labor market earlier, and most combine school with work. Many more are from single-parent families,** and a significant minority are single parents themselves. Thus, both economic and social factors make the transition from school to permanent jobs more challenging for today's youth than it was for their parents.

ENTERING THE LABOR FORCE

Simple but vital steps in the economic maturation process are initially moving into the labor force (the labor force is the sum of the employed and those seeking jobs) and establishing a work orientation. Both the Baby Boomers and the current generation show a strong market work orientation—much stronger, in fact, than that of their peers of the 1960s. In 1960, there were 11.5 million youth in the labor force. By 1979, their **number had risen by an astonishing 120 percent to 25.4 million.** The prime-age labor force (workers 25 years of age and older) increased by 37 percent over the same period, or at less than one-third of the rate of growth for youth.

Much of the increase was due to population growth, but youth's overall labor force participation rate (the percentage of their civilian noninstitutional population that is in the labor force), rose from 56.4 percent in 1960 to 68.6 percent in 1979. If the average had remained at its 1960 level, their labor force would have grown by only 9.3 million instead of the actual rise of 13.9 million. **Increased participation, therefore, contributed 4.5 million additional youth to the job market, or nearly one-third of the overall increase between 1960 and 1979.**

Historically, men have been more likely to work than women, and that is still the case. However, this has not been a static relationship. **Since the early 1950s, women have assumed an ever-larger role in the market economy, sharply increasing the growth rate of the labor force.** Over the twenty years ending in 1979, the labor force participation rate of 20 to 24-year-old married women more than doubled (from 30 to 61.5 percent) while the rate for divorced, separated and widowed women rose from 55 percent in 1959 to 74 percent in 1979. Teenage girls boosted their participation rate by 15 percentage points to about 54 percent.[40]

Over the same period, the labor force participation rate for 20 to 24-year-old men, already high in 1960 at 77 percent for single men and 97.5 percent for married men, actually declined slightly and the rate of male teenagers rose only one-third as much as that of teenage girls. **Thus, the "extra" workers arising from increased labor force participation of the Baby Boom generation were primarily women.** A 20 percentage point net increase in their labor force participation rate accounted for 3.7 million "extra" workers by 1979. A net increase of 3.3 percentage points for young men accounted for 600,000 "extra" job candidates.

LABOR FORCE TRENDS IN THE 1980s

Recessions generally have offsetting effects on the labor force participation of young people. On the one hand,

economic contractions with the attendant slack demand for workers will induce some youth to stay out of the labor market, perhaps to go to school, thereby curtailing labor force growth. Conversely, unemployment in the family, especially for the prime breadwinner, and the consequent reduction in family income induces some youth to enter the labor force.

Early in the 1980s, the nation experienced the severest labor market conditions since the Great Depression. At that time, slack labor demand brought an abrupt and decisive end to the rising labor force participation of youth. Their average participation rate declined from 69 percent early in 1979 to 66.9 percent early in 1983. Participation did not return to the 1979 level until seven years later. Declines apparently were most severe among the disadvantaged.

Minority youth are much less likely to be in the labor force than are whites. **About 57 percent of black youth and 65 percent of Hispanic youth were in the work force in 1988, as compared to 71 percent for whites.** White students and nonstudents are much more likely to be in the labor force than comparable groups of blacks and Hispanics, as shown below:

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES: 1988
(percent of population in the labor force)

Years of Age	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total, 16–24	68.4	71.0	56.8	65.3
16–19	55.3	58.6	40.8	49.6
20–24	78.7	80.6	70.5	76.3
Nonstudents:				
16–19	72.7	75.4	59.3	65.5
20–24	83.9	85.8	74.9	78.2
Students:				
16–19	44.1	47.5	29.5	34.9
20–24	59.7	61.8	49.6	64.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) pp. 162–168

ARMED FORCES

The nation's armed forces provide employment, income, and an avenue to good civilian jobs for some youth. About 55 percent of all uniformed personnel are 16 to 24-years of age. About 90 percent of these youth, some 915,000, are men. Minorities are more likely to serve than whites. **In 1988, almost seven percent of all young black men and about five percent of young white men** were in the Armed Forces.

During most of the 1980s, the military services have been able to attract more highly-educated recruits because of the slack in the civilian economy. This **upgrading of recruits foreclosed opportunities for dropouts and disadvantaged youth to use military training and experience as a stepping stone to good civilian jobs.** The loss of such a broad avenue of training, discipline in work life, and on-the-job experience meant that some youth, who might otherwise have acquired the skills necessary to be competitive in the civilian sector or have chosen to make a military career, never had the chance.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Overall, the restoration of pre-recession employment rates was accomplished during 1988. On average, 20 million 16 to 24-year-olds held full or part-time civilian jobs in 1988, down from 22.4 million in 1979—before the recession and the decline in the youth population began. The percentage of youth with jobs was 60.8 percent in 1988, compared to 60.6 percent in 1979. Still, minority youth, especially blacks, continue to face poor job prospects. Only 43 percent of black 16 to 24-year-olds and 57 percent of Hispanics were employed during 1988—compared to 64 percent of their white peers.

CIVILIAN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT: 1988
(millions of 16–24-year-olds)

Years of Age	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Civilian population	33.0	27.1	4.7	3.3
Employed	20.0	17.5	2.0	1.9
Percent employed	60.8%	64.4%	43.2%	56.9%
Male population	16.2	13.4	2.2	1.7
Employed	10.4	9.1	1.1	1.1
Percent employed	64.1%	67.5%	47.1%	65.7%
Female population	16.7	13.7	2.5	1.6
Employed	9.6	8.4	1.0	.8
Percent employed	57.6%	61.4%	39.6%	46.8%

Note: Hispanics may be of any race and are, therefore, included in white and black categories as well as being shown separately. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) pp. 162–168

Rising civilian labor force participation during the two decades ending in 1979 was accomplished in part by an increased propensity to combine schooling and work. As of February 1989, 77 percent of all 16 to 19-year-olds were students, and 43 percent of those in school were also in the labor force.[41] At this age, most of those who are in the labor force work only part-time, and they may confine

their activities to the weekends. Their pay for such work is at the lowest end of the pay scale. Teenagers tend to be quite casual about work; most who have jobs also have families to back them up financially and many are willing to quit on short notice for personal reasons or because of school demands. As a consequence, youth, especially nonHispanic whites, have more frequent spells of unemployment than prime-age workers but, on average, their unemployed periods tend to be much shorter.

Youth in their early 20s command higher wage rates, work more hours per week and weeks per year, and earn much more per year. Of course, those who have other primary goals, such as going to college, generally adapt to the workings of the peripheral labor market; they are willing to provide labor intermittently, at low wages, and without fringe benefits or job security. Among those aged 20 to 24-years in February 1989, about 27 percent were enrolled in school and 59 percent of these also were holding down a job.

High school graduates not pursuing postsecondary education often are involved in a learning process that encompasses job search and job changing to sample types and conditions of work. For the **minority** of high school graduates who do not enroll in some type of postsecondary education program, the labor market generally becomes their primary lifetime activity, and their attachment to work is anything but casual. Almost 85 percent of civilian 16 to 24-year-old high school graduates not currently enrolled in school were in the labor force in February 1989. The labor force commitment of high school dropouts, by contrast, appears to be quite weak; in February, only 65 percent were in the labor force, and more than one out of five of those in the workforce were jobless.

CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The unemployment rate for 16 to 24-year olds averaged 11 percent in 1988 and early 1989, marginally lower than in the late 1970s but still well above the less than nine percent rates that prevailed in the late 1960s. As is always the case, jobless rates were highest during 1988 for younger workers—17.5 percent for 16 to 17-year-olds contrasted with 8.7 percent for 20 to 24-year-olds. Most unemployed youth are white, but jobless rates are much higher for minorities. During 1988, jobless rates were around 24 percent for black 16 to 24-year-olds and 14 percent for Hispanics, as compared to just over nine percent for whites. Jobless rates for students and nonstudents are shown on the following chart.

On average, 2.5 million youth were unemployed during 1988. Almost 85 percent of the jobless were single (never married), and virtually all of them still lived with their parents. About 100,000 young men and 200,000 young women were married with a spouse present, and 90,000 (2 to 1 women) were divorced, separated or widowed.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF YOUTH: 1988
(percent unemployed)

Years of Age	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total, 16–24				
16–19	15.3	13.1	32.4	21.9
20–24	8.7	7.1	19.6	9.8
Nonstudents:				
16–19	16.6	14.2	33.6	21.3
20–24	9.2	7.4	20.2	10.1
Students:				
16–19	13.9	11.9	30.9	23.2
20–24	6.3	5.4	15.3	7.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) pp. 162–8

JOBLESSNESS RELATIVE TO ADULTS

There always has been a significant gap between the unemployment rates of youth and prime-age workers. By virtue of the much larger increase in their labor force during the 1970s, youth faced a much more competitive market, and, other things being equal, their jobless rates were bound to rise relative to those of prime-age workers.[42] **In 1955, the jobless rate for youth was 2.1 times the rate for prime-age workers. By 1988, it was more than 2.6 times the rate for prime-age workers.**

The unemployment gap is much larger for minority than majority youth, and, since the late 1950s, the ratio of the jobless rate of black to white youth has risen. In 1988, the ratio was 2.3 to one, compared to a ratio of 1.75 to one in 1960, when the rapid growth of the entry age labor force

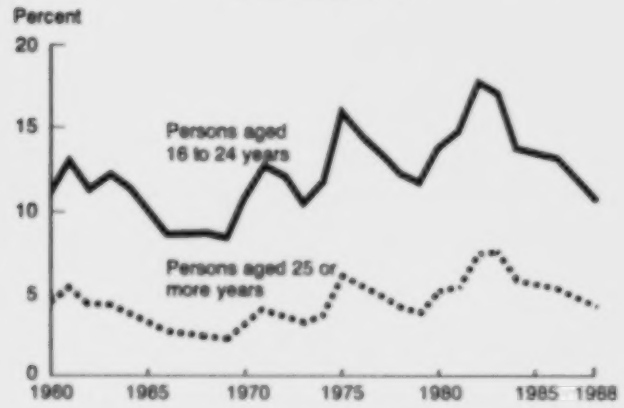
JOBLESS RATES OF YOUTH BY RACE: 1955–86
(percent of labor force unemployed)

Year	White	Black and others	Ratio
1955	7.9	13.8	1.75
1960	10.2	17.9	1.75
1965	9.2	16.9	1.84
1970	9.9	19.4	1.96
1975	14.5	27.6	1.90
1980	12.0	26.4	2.20
1985	11.4	27.1	2.38
1988	9.3	21.4	2.30

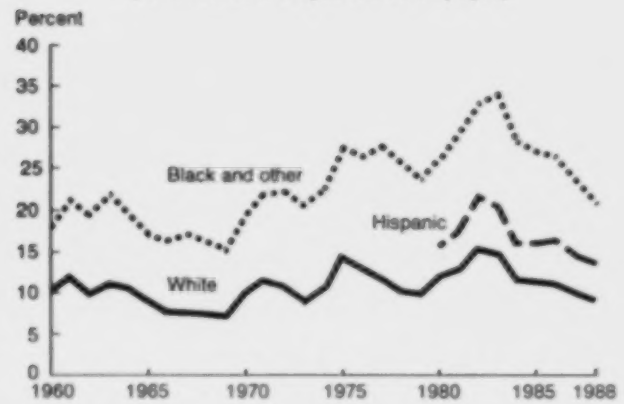
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics Derived From the Current Population Survey*, Bulletin 2307, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 514, 537 and *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) pp. 163–164

Chart 8

Unemployment Rates of Youth and Adults, 1960-1988
(Percent unemployed)



Unemployment Rates of Youth by Race and Ethnicity
(Percent of 16 to 24-year-olds unemployed)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, see note 40.

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began and 2.2 to one in 1980, when the sharp decline in the entry age labor force began. As the table below illustrates, in addition to losing ground to prime-age workers, young blacks lost ground to their white peers. **The unemployment gap for white youth is merely chronic. For black youth, the gap has widened persistently.**

UNEMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

"Good" entry-level jobs almost always require a minimum of a high school degree, and many require some relevant experience and/or specialized training. Youth who do not complete high school—dropouts comprise about 14 percent of all persons in their early 20s—carry an extra set of negative labels and tend to gravitate to the bottom of modern day employers' hiring lists. As shown below, **joblessness varies inversely and sharply with educational attainment:**

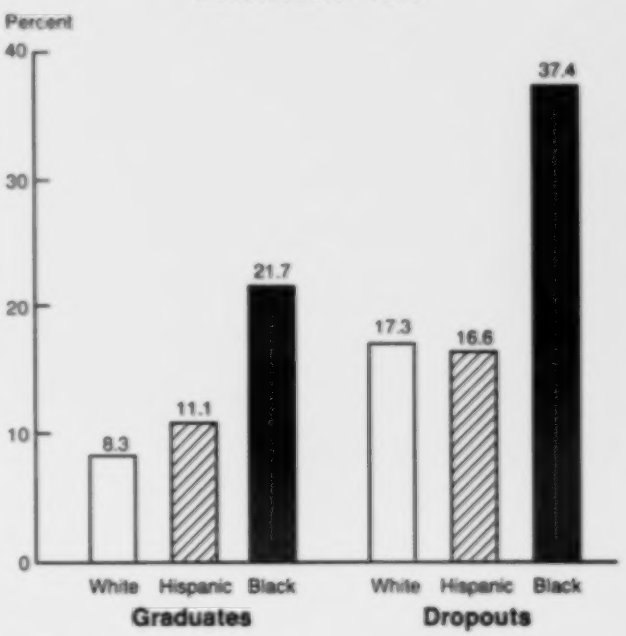
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: 1988
(percent of *nonstudent* 16–24-year-olds unemployed)

Education	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	11.1	9.2	23.4	12.8
High School:				
Did not complete	20.0	17.3	37.4	16.6
Completed	10.1	8.3	21.7	11.1
College:				
One to 3 years	6.3	5.0	14.4	6.6
Four or more years	4.8	4.3	7.4	5.8

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: January 1989) p. 168

Chart 9

Unemployment Rates of 16 to 24-Year-Old Nonstudents: 1988



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, see note 40.

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Black youth experience higher unemployment than whites. Their labor market disadvantages include lower levels of educational attainment, often in inferior schools, lack of familial contacts with mainstream job opportunities, and fewer "good" job opportunities near their homes. Hispanic youth face many of the same problems, but their jobless rates are much lower than the rates for blacks.

ANNUAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND INCOME

The number and proportion of youth who work at some time during the year is, of course, much higher than the number employed during an average month. Three of every four 16 to 24-year-olds worked for pay sometime during 1987. Many 15-year-olds had some employment as well, and some youth had income from sources other than earnings.[43] Public assistance and welfare payments to young mothers are, for example, reflected in the annual income figures.[44]

In all, almost 30 million, or four of every five, 15 to 24-year-old youth reported some individual income during 1987. Young men were slightly more likely to have income than women and 20 to 24-year-olds were much more likely to report income than teenagers (92 vs 65 percent.) The proportion of youth with work experience and earned income rises sharply with age. About half of the 16 and 17-year-olds worked as did 75 percent of the 18 and 19-year-olds. Most teenagers work part time, and those who worked full-time generally did so for less than six months. Such work patterns are subordinate to school attendance. By contrast, **more than 85 percent of all 20 to 24-year-olds worked; well over half worked year-round primarily at full-time jobs.**[45]

The annual incomes of youth reflected these work patterns. The average income of teenagers with income—12 million in all—was $3,112. The few who worked full-time year-round (502,000 young men and 383,000 women) reported much higher average incomes—$10,893 for males and $10,731 for females. The incomes of 20 to 24-year-old men and women who had income were $10,901 and $8,406, respectively, in 1987. As with teenagers, those who worked full-time, year-round had much higher incomes, $15,855 for men and $13,731 for women.[46]

Whites were more likely to have worked than black or Hispanic youth. Two-thirds of white teens and 88 percent of white 20 to 24-year-olds worked during 1987. This compares with percentages of 40 for black and 58 for Hispanic teenagers and 68 and 79, respectively, for black and Hispanic 20 to 24-year-olds. Regardless of gender or age, Hispanic youth who worked were more likely to hold full-time jobs and were slightly more likely to work year round than either blacks or whites. Reflecting these work patterns, Hispanic teenagers' average annual income was significantly higher than for whites or blacks. In contrast, white 20 to 24-year-olds have much higher incomes than either blacks or Hispanics, as is shown in the following tabulation:

INCOME BY GENDER, AGE, AND RACE/ ETHNICITY: 1987

	MEN		WOMEN	
	15–19	20–24	15–19	20–24
Percent with income:				
Total	67.6	94.0	63.7	90.1
Whites	71.1	95.8	67.0	91.1
Blacks	50.0	83.7	47.6	86.0
Hispanics	50.3	90.0	42.5	78.8
Average income of those with income:				
Total	$3,256	$10,901	$2,965	$8,406
Whites	3,378	11,286	2,998	8,749
Blacks	2,486	8,484	2,829	6,500
Hispanics	4,118	9,693	2,890	7,663

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status: 1987*, Advance Report, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) Series P-60, Number 161, pp. 11–19

ASSESSING THE 1980s

In 1979–80, the economy was poised for an era of declining pressures from the youth segment of the labor force. The population of younger Americans was about to begin a decline that will persist through the middle 1990s. This downward trend presented an opportunity to deal with the pervasive deterioration of the labor market situation of young people. That deterioration was manifested in many ways: unemployment differences between youth and prime-age workers had increased; unemployment differences between race groups had widened dramatically; with the fundamental change in the labor force behavior of young women, their jobless rates had surpassed the rates of young men; and the wage rate and earnings experience of youth had worsened relative to prime-age workers.

Policymakers and the concerned public expected that the pending declines in the number of youth would reverse the progressive deterioration in their employment situation. It did not. In fact, during the recessions of the early 1980s, the jobless rate for 16 to 24-year-olds as a group reached a quarterly cyclical high of 19 percent—by far the highest rate for this age group since the Great Depression. From peak to trough, their number employed fell by 2.7 million, a much larger relative drop than the decline for adult workers.

Joblessness among youth edged lower and participation rose moderately as the economy began to expand in 1983,

but the recovery in labor force participation was slow. It was not until 1986, when almost 68.6 percent of youth were working or actively seeking work, that their annual rate of participation got back to its 1979 level. In part, the slow recovery reflected the continuance of high jobless levels. **Unemployment among youth simply did not fall as much or as fast during the recovery as it might have been expected to in light of past cyclical experience.** The continued high rate of joblessness among youth late in the recovery was of particular concern because their population and, consequently, their numbers in the labor force have been declining over the entire period spanning the recessions and the recovery. The population and labor force declines were not trivial: the 16 to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population dropped 11 percent to 33 million in 1988 from a high of 37.2 million in 1980. Their number in the labor force also dropped 11 percent—2.9 million—from its 1979 peak to 23.4 million in 1988.

Gender and age groups exhibited much different patterns during the recessions and recovery. **The participation rate of male teenagers dropped most during the economic contractions, turned up later in the recovery phase, and did not regain its former level.** It remains five percentage points below the 1979 high. By contrast, women 20 to 24-years of age increased their participation during the 1980s. As a result, the representation of 20 to 24-year-old women in the labor force increased and that of teenage males declined. This pattern is not entirely a cyclical development. Government projections anticipate that increasing participation of young women and stable or declining participation for teenage males will continue for the rest of this century. Thus, the changing composition of the labor force will continue along a path that results in a larger share of young women and a smaller share of young men.[47]

Since students—male and female alike—are less likely to be in the labor force than nonstudents, higher college enrollment rates might initially appear to offer an explanation for the slow recovery of labor force participation. However, both school enrollment and labor force participation rates rose for young women, while they declined significantly for teenage males and held about steady for 20 to 24-year-old men. The mix of trends suggests that other forces must be instrumental in the differential behavior and the outcomes for young men and young women.

One factor is the vigor of the cyclical recovery in industrial sectors that are more likely to hire men than women. The resumption of job growth since 1982 has been concentrated in service-producing industries, while recovery in the industrial sector has been slow, in part because of intense competition from foreign producers. Since the vast majority of young people find their initial employment in service-sector jobs, the slow and weak recovery of manufacturing would not, on the surface, appear to cause any special problems for young adults. Historically, however, many young men have gra' 'tated from service jobs into the manufacturing sector of the economy. In 1979, factories provided 19.7 percent of the wage and salary jobs held by youth. In 1988, factories provided only 13 percent of the jobs held by youth. Since factory work is dominated by males, the continued weakness in factory labor demand has been one important factor in the slower cyclical recovery in the employment of young men.

SUMMARY

Thus far in the 1980s, a shrinking population and a slowly growing economy have not fully ameliorated high unemployment among youth. Indeed, six years of economic recovery brought the 1988 employment-population ratio of youth up to only 60.8 percent, about on par with the rate of the late 1970s. The poor employment prospects for youth in general translate into a virtual depression for young blacks. **Joblessness among black youth averaged 24 percent for the year: 19.6 percent for 20 to 24-year-olds and 32 percent for teens.** With the relative increase in the black unemployment rate, the decline in their employment-population ratio, and the lower earnings experience, a significant share of black youth are "out of the system." Only 70 percent of 20 to 24-year-old black men were in the labor force in 1988, down from 90 percent in 1960.

Of 16 to 24-year-old blacks not enrolled in school in December 1988, a total of 718,000 (28 percent) did not have a high school diploma. These youth appear to have bleak prospects. About 45 percent of them (327,000) were not working or looking for work and of the meager 55 percent in the labor force, more than four out of every ten were unemployed. **They are an obvious, serious, and perhaps even ominous manifestation of the economic crisis of young blacks in our society.**[48]

Notes

39. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics Derived From the Current Population Survey*, Bulletin 2096, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1982) p. 726 and *Employment and Earnings*, January 1989, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 225

40. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January 1989, Volume 36, Number 1, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 162–172 and *Labor Force Statistics Derived From the Current Population Survey*, Bulletin 2307, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 75, 85, 133, 136, 794–796
41. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, March 1989, Volume 36, Number 3, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 21–22
42. R. Freeman and J. Medoff, "The Youth Labor Market Problem In The United States: An Overview," in R. Freeman and D. Wise, eds. *The Youth Labor Market Problem: Its Nature, Causes, and Consequences*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL: 1982) pp. 35–70
43. Census Bureau, *Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1987*, Advance Report, Series P-60, Number 161, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 15–18
44. Census Bureau, *Poverty in the United States: 1987*, Series P-60, Number 163, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 29–31
45. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unpublished data from the work experience supplement to the March 1988 Current Population Survey.
46. Census Bureau, *Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1987*, Series P-60, Number 162, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 61–69
47. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment Projections For 1995: Data and Methods*, Bulletin 2253, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 17
48. R. Freeman and H. Holzer, *The Black Youth Employment Crisis*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL: 1986) pp. 3–18

Marriage and Childbearing

Today's young Americans marry later in life than their parents did, and, despite earlier sexual activity, young women now have children later in life than did their mothers. These patterns represent complete reversals of marriage and childbearing trends of the 1950s. Some theories suggest that delayed marriage and childbearing behaviors should be reversed as the crowding effect of the large Baby Boom cohorts eased.[49] Today's youth, however, drawn entirely from the "Baby Bust" generation, have decisively extended the delayed marriage trend. As a result, relatively **fewer youth have ever been married and relatively fewer are responsible for children today** than at any time in the prior 35 to 40 years.

MARRIAGE TRENDS

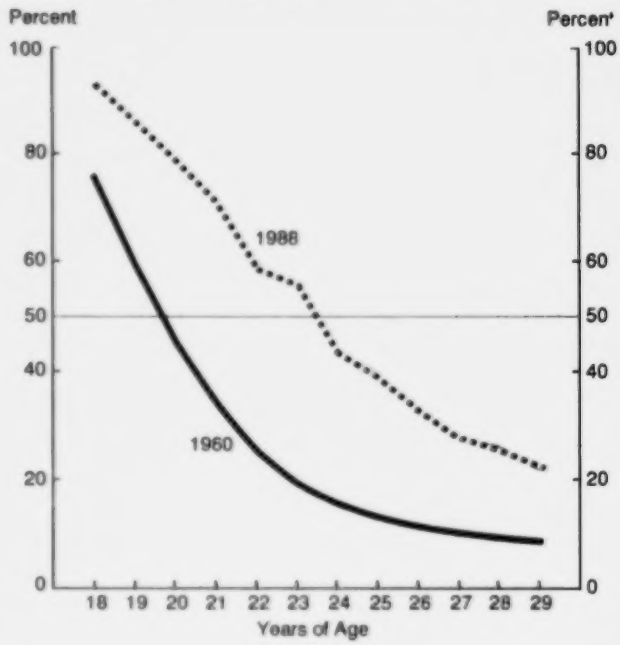
Young Americans began to delay marriage in the late 1950s and have continued to do so during both good and bad economic conditions. For women, the median age at first marriage stood at a near-record 23.6 years in 1988. The median for men was 25.9 years, its highest point since the turn of the century.[50] On average, first marriages of both women and men occur at least three years later than was the case in the late 1950s. **The median age at first marriage rose more than two years between 1975 and 1985,** a period of economic stress and high unemployment among youth. The economy has been comparatively strong and the number of young adults has been declining over the past three years, yet the median age at first marriage rose about one-third of a year for both men and women. As shown in Chart 10, **at any given age, young people are much less likely to be married than were the youth of their parents' generation.**

For young women, delayed marriage, increased college attendance, and rising labor force participation are closely linked. The dominant underlying causes may be unclear, but the numbers are crystal clear. In 1960, 43 percent of 20 to 24-year-old women were working or seeking work. The percent doing so rose to 51 in 1970, 62 in 1980, and 73 percent in 1988. **The proportion of never married women this age rose from 28 percent in 1960,** to 36 percent in 1970, to 50 percent in 1980, and **to 61 percent in 1988.** Similarly, the proportion of 18 to 24-year-old women **enrolled in college rose from 12 percent in 1960,** to 20 percent in 1970, to 25 percent in 1980, and **to 28 percent in 1986.**

Single rates for young men have always been higher than for women, but 20 to 24-year-old men boosted their

Chart 10

Young Adults Are Staying Single Longer
(Percent of young women never married)



Source: Census Bureau, see note 50.

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unmarried proportion to 78 percent in 1988 from 53 percent in 1960, while 18 year-old males who had never married rose from about 75 percent in 1960 to more than 92 percent in 1988. The decline in the marriage rate for young men is pervasive across education and income groups. That is, **the proportion of never-married men has risen as much or more among employed high school and college graduates as it has for school dropouts and unemployed men or men with low incomes.**[51]

Delayed marriage has sharply reduced the percentage of young adults with family responsibilities. **In 1960, half of all 18 to 24-year-old women were already wives and/or mothers in a separate family household. By 1988, the percentage had shrunk to 30 percent.** In 1960, 31.6 percent of all young men in this age group were married and living

with their spouse. By 1988, this proportion had been cut in half, to only 15.4 percent.

In all, six million 18 to 24-year-old youth were living in their own family household in March 1988. At two million, the total for young men was down 35 percent, more than one million, from 1980. The total for young women was four million—down 25 percent (1.3 million) from 1980. These reductions were two to three times larger than the percentage decline in the youth population.

Early marriage still is associated with high rates of separation and divorce. In March 1988, there were 600,000 already divorced or separated young women. There were 10 divorced and 7 separated for every 100 married young women living with their husbands. In 1960, by contrast, only 3 were divorced and 4 were separated per 100 married young women.

CHILDBEARING TRENDS

Fertility of married women of all race, ethnic, and income groups has dropped sharply since the 1950s, bringing about a huge decline in the birth rate of young women. Women in the 18 to 24-year-old age group **recorded an overall birth rate of 87 children per 1,000 in the year ending in June 1988, down markedly from** estimated rates of 140 per 1,000 in 1970 and **195 per 1,000 in 1960.**[52] The entire reduction was among married women. Over the same time span, the birth rate of unmarried women rose.[53]

As is illustrated in Chart 11, **births to teenagers** fell from 8.9 per 100 in 1960 to 5.1 per 100 in 1986, **a drop of 43 percent over 26 years. Among 20 to 24-year-old women** the rate fell even more sharply, from 25.8 births per 100 in 1960 to 10.8 per 100 in 1986, **a drop of 58 percent over 26 years.** The decline in overall fertility is, in part, a result of the availability of abortion. The total number of abortions has been comparatively stable during the 1980s at about one million annually among 15 to 24-year-old women. About 46 percent of all teen pregnancies and 32 percent of all pregnancies of 20 to 24-year-olds end in abortions.[54]

During the year ending in June 1988, 19 of every 100 currently married, 15 of every 100 divorced or widowed, and four of every 100 never-married 18 to 24-year-olds had babies. Childbearing is inversely related to educational attainment—13 of every 100 young women who had not graduated from high school gave birth compared to four per 100 among those who had completed four years of college. **Birth rates are highest in low-income families, three times as high at incomes under $10,000 as at $35,000 to $50,000 of income.** The 1988 childbearing rate for white 18 to 24-year-old women was about 8 per 100, the rate for black women was 15 per 100, and the rate for Hispanic women was 12 per 100.

Chart 11

Birth Rate Trends for Young Women
(Births per 1,000 women by age)

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, see note 53.

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TEENAGE CHILDBEARING

An estimated one million teenage women became pregnant in 1986, and 472,000 gave birth. About one-fifth of the teens who gave birth in 1986 had their second or third child. About 10,000 births were to girls less than 15 years of age, and there were 169,000 births to 15 to 17-year-olds. Reflecting these trends, about 11 percent of 18 and 19-year-old women already have become mothers, and one in 50 have two or more children. About 45 percent of all ever-married 18 and 19-year-olds are mothers as are about 7.5 percent of the never married. Nearly two-thirds of the nation's 18 and 19-year-old mothers have never been married. White 18 and 19-year-old mothers number about 315,000; 60 percent are or have been married. About 143,000 black 18 to 19-year-olds are mothers; fewer than one-tenth are or were married. About two-thirds of the 55,000 Hispanic 18 to 19-year-old mothers are or were married.[55]

Regardless of race, disadvantaged teens are three to four times more likely to become unwed mothers than

advantaged teenagers. Regardless of marital status, however, early childbearing is highly correlated with lower educational attainment, low income, and nonparticipation in the labor force. Among 18 to 24-year-olds, those who had not completed high school had an average of 7.9 children per 100, while those who had some college education averaged only 1.5 children per 100. Young women not in the labor force had an average of 7.7 children per 100, while those in the labor force had an average of 2.7 children per 100.

OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS

Declining fertility of married women has been accompanied by a rising birth rate for young unmarried women. **In 1986, 61 percent of all teenage births were to unmarried mothers—153,000 whites, 128,000 blacks, and 9,000 other races.**[56] The out-of-wedlock proportion for 1960 was only 17 percent. Moreover, almost 29 percent of all births to 20 to 24-year-olds were to unmarried mothers, compared to 15 percent in 1960. This trend, coupled with the high separation and divorce rates among those who marry young, means that large numbers of young women are both single and mothers—a combination that often cripples their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.

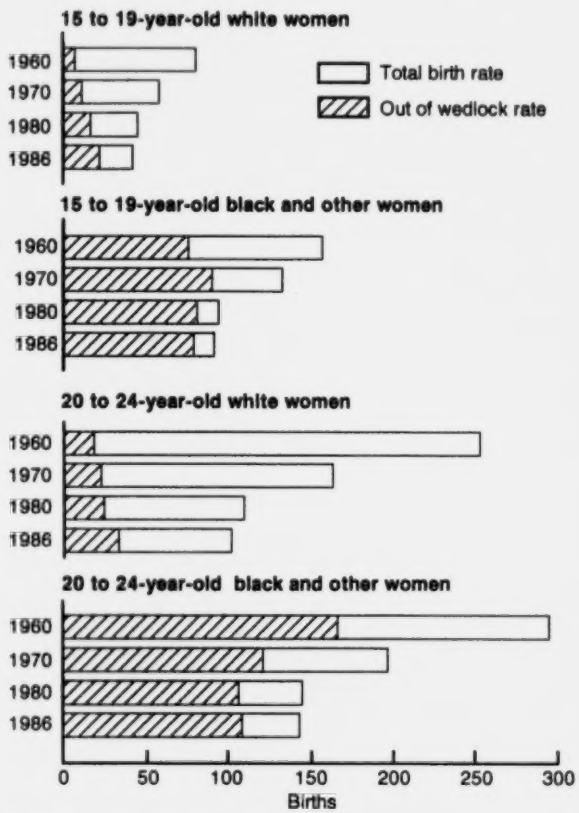
Births to unmarried teenagers have risen quite steadily since 1950 when there were 12.6 births per 1,000 unmarried 15 to 19-year-olds. The rate rose to 15.3 in 1960; to 22.4 in 1970; to 27.6 in 1980; and to 32.6 births per 1,000 in 1986. The entire rise occurred among white girls.

Out-of-wedlock birth rates declined for young black women between 1971 and 1983 but turned up again after 1984. Still, as shown in Chart 12, annual birth rates are down about one-tenth from 1970 for black teenagers and are down almost one-third from 1960 among 20 to 24-year-old black women. **By contrast, rates have risen steadily and substantially for whites,** having doubled for teenagers and risen by 50 percent for 20 to 24-year-olds. The out-of-wedlock birth rate for Hispanic teens was 40 per 1,000 in 1980 and, while definitive evidence is not available, the rate appears to have risen further in the 1980s.

Despite the convergence of unwed childbearing rates, the proportion of out-of-wedlock births is much higher for black than for white women. In 1986, approximately 9 percent of unmarried black teenagers had out-of-wedlock babies, compared to 2.2 percent of white teenagers. Historically, black women have delayed marriage to a greater extent than white women, but in the past two decades, black teenage marriage has virtually disappeared. Thus, black teenagers are at higher risk of early parenthood; they account for 15 percent of the 18 and 19-year-old female population, about 31 percent of those who have ever given birth, and half of the never-married mothers this age.

Chart 12

Birth Rates of Young Women by Race and Age
(Births per 1,000 women in the specified group)



Source: National Center For Health Statistics, see note 55.

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THE OUTLOOK

Birth rates have declined sharply, but total childbearing by women under age 25 may reach 1.5 million during 1989. Young wives may bear about 900,000 infants and as many as 600,000 out-of-wedlock babies may be born by teens and women in their early 20s. Having a child out-of-wedlock is a virtual guarantee of living in poverty for the young mother and her child or children. Most unwed young women have to assume the full burden of supporting and nurturing their children, and a large share of them are not equipped with the education, training, or work experience necessary to provide their children a secure and financially viable home.[57] Moreover, many young wives will divorce or separate during 1989, and they, too, will face

a difficult path as they try to support and nurture their families. Many eventually will marry, but, in the meantime, opportunities to become established, well-educated, participatory adults will be foregone. As the next section shows, poverty is a nearly universal condition among young mothers attempting to make it on their own.

SINGLE MOTHERS AND POVERTY

Only a small fraction of youth earn enough to support a family adequately and almost none of them are single or divorced mothers. **One out of every six families with an annual income under $5,000 is headed by a youth and most of them are single mothers.** In March 1988, 843,000 young mothers without a husband present were responsible for maintaining family households.

These young mothers were responsible for a total of 1.2 million children, almost all of them less than six years old. Of the family households maintained by single mothers, **586,000 (70 percent) had money incomes below the official poverty level.** More than two-thirds of youth's families living in poverty are headed by young never-married, separated, or divorced mothers with children. Households maintained by single-mothers often are dependent on major social income maintenance programs. During 1987, 28.6 percent of the aggregate income of young single mothers was from sources other than earnings. One study, covering a 32-month period, showed that 54 percent of such households received some major assistance (AFDC, SSI, Medicaid, food stamps, general assistance and housing assistance), and 27.6 percent received all of their income from such sources.[58]

RACE AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

The majority of young mothers maintaining separate homes with their children are white, but blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately represented and are more likely to be poor. Young white women caring for children in separate households, without a husband present, numbered 526,000; their poverty rate was 63 percent. Hispanic women independently maintained almost 137,000 households with young children—they experienced a poverty rate of 70 percent. Almost 300,000 (35 percent of the total) of these households were maintained by young black women; their poverty rate was 81 percent.

Almost six of every ten black youth's families are comprised of a single-mother with young children, about triple the proportion for whites. Young black women maintaining homes with children, who are less likely to have been married or to receive child support, reported average income of $5,914 in 1987. About 45 percent of their total income was from sources other than earnings. Two of every ten young white families were separately maintained by a mother with young children. These young white women, who are more likely to have been married and to receive child support, reported average money income of $10,287 during 1987. About 23 percent of their total income was from sources other than earnings.

POVERTY STATUS OF YOUNG SINGLE-MOTHER HOUSEHOLDS: 1987
(numbers in thousands, 15 to 24-year-olds)

	Total	Poverty: Number	Poverty: Rate
Female householder	843	586	69.5%
Whites	526	330	62.8%
Blacks	294	239	81.3%
Hispanics	137	95	69.6%

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status: 1987*, Advance Report, Series P-60, Number 161, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 36–37

CHILDREN AND POVERTY

Young single mothers living in poverty generally have less education than their childless peers, and they are less likely to be enrolled in school. A young woman with less-than-average schooling, and the responsibilities of caring for young children, has scant chance of achieving or sustaining a middle-class standard of living. And, the young mothers who are trying to make it on their own in separate family households are not the only problem. In 1988, an additional 737,000 young mothers lived with their children (more than a million) in others' households, usually in their own parents' homes.[59] Many of these single-mother subfamilies also must survive on poverty-level incomes.

Taking into account the young single mothers living at home as well as those maintaining separate households, **there are 1.6 million mother-child families with more than two million children.** Most of these young women will spend much of their lives fighting an uphill battle for economic survival and the well-being of their children. And, their children clearly are at risk. The short and long-term adverse correlates of poverty to children's well-being include:[60]

Children from poverty backgrounds are more likely to have learning disabilities, to fall behind in school, and to drop out of school.

Children from poverty backgrounds are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system, to be confined in juvenile correction facilities and, when older, to be arrested and incarcerated for both violent and property crimes.

Teenage girls from low-income families are three times more likely to become unwed mothers than their economically better-off peers.

Youth from poverty backgrounds are less likely to be in the labor force and, when they are, they are more likely to be unemployed. Those who are employed tend to have low earnings.

In 1988, about two-thirds of young mothers maintaining separate homes with their children had never been married. This is a sharp change from the 1960s, when most young women maintaining separate family households were divorced or separated. In 1985, at the time of the last survey of child support arrangements, 2.9 million women under 30 years of age were caring for their children by absent fathers. Only 45 percent—1.3 million—had been awarded child support and 32 percent actually received some or all of the amount awarded. On average, those who received child support received about $1,500, a modest average in light of the cost of providing adequate care for a young child.

About half of the young mothers who were not awarded child support wanted it, but were unable to obtain a child support award by negotiation or through the courts.[61] The likelihood of future young mothers—whether never married, divorced, or separated—receiving an award and actually receiving child support payments will increase over the next few years as the features of the Welfare Reform Act of 1988 that provide for automatic compulsory payments of child support by an absent parent come into full effect.

Notes

49. See, for example, R.A. Easterlin, *Births and Fortune*. (Basic Books, New York: 1980) or "Relative Economic Status and the American Fertility Swing," pp. 170–223 in Eleanor Sheldon, ed., *Family Economic Behavior*, (J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia: 1973)
50. Census Bureau, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1988*, Series P-20, Number 433, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1979) pp. 3–4, 9–10, 29–36, 60–64
51. R. Lerman, "Employment Opportunities of Young Men and Family Formation," *American Economic Review*, Volume 79, Number 2, May 1989, pp. 62–66
52. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women: June 1988*, Series P-20, Number 465, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 1–4, 12–15 and *Previous and Prospective Fertility: 1967*, Series P-20, Number 211, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1974) pp. 13–14
53. National Center for Health Statistics, *Advance Natality Statistics, 1986*, Volume 37, Supplement 3, July 1988, p. 17–18
54. K. Moore, et al, "Trends in Adolescent Sexual and Fertility Behavior" in National Academy of Sciences, *Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy and Childbearing*, Volume II, (National Academy Press, Washington DC: 1987) pp. 96–109 and Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1989*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 70
55. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women: June 1988*, Series P-20, Number 465, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 2–4, 15–16, 26–29 and *Previous and Prospective Fertility: 1967*, Series P-20, Number 211, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1974) pp. 13–14
56. National Center for Health Statistics, *Advance Natality Statistics, 1986*, Volume 37, Supplement 3, July 1988, p. 18, 33–34
57. S. Hofferth, "Social and Economic Consequences of Teenage Childbearing" in National Academy of Sciences, *Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy and Childbearing*, Volume II, (National Academy Press, Washington DC: 1987) pp. 143–154
58. Census Bureau, *Characteristics of Persons Receiving Benefits From Major Assistance Programs*, Series P-70, Number 14, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) p. 14
59. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women: June 1988*, Series P-20, Number 465, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 2–4, 15–16, 26–29
60. S. Hofferth, "The Children of Teenage Childbearers" in National Academy of Sciences, *Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy and Childbearing*, Volume II, (National Academy Press, Washington DC: 1987) pp. 174–206
61. Census Bureau, *Child Support and Alimony: 1985*, Series P-23, Number 154, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 7–19

Health

Medical and nutritional gains, coupled with extensions of health-care coverage, have resulted in better health and greater life expectancy for today's youth than for their parents and grandparents. Nonetheless, life and health-threatening factors continue to take their toll on our young adults and teenagers. Accidents, particularly in automobiles, continue to extract a heavy price in youthful death and injuries. Other concerns center on personally determined behaviors—such as smoking, drinking, and drug abuse—that are associated with health problems later in life.

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

Accidents are the primary cause of death among American youth. At 51 per 100,000 young men and women, accidental deaths were responsible for almost twice as much loss of life in 1986 as the next three leading causes: homicide (14 per 100,000), suicide (13 per 100,000), and cancer (5.4 per 100,000).[62] Except for cancer, young men are much more likely than women to die or be injured from these causes.

ACCIDENTS

Deaths of youth in auto accidents totaled 15,227 during 1986, an appreciable reduction from the middle 1970s. Many factors contributed to the reduction, and we do not know with confidence the exact contribution of the various initiatives. Increased use of safety devices, mainly seat belts, and improved auto design likely were factors. However, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 40 percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related, and the ratio may be somewhat higher among younger drivers. Reflecting the importance of drinking in accidents, many feel that the sharply increased public outcry against drinking and driving, and new laws raising the legal drinking age to 21, have been vital in the improvement. Between 1983 and 1986, responding to federal legislation, 26 states moved the minimum drinking age up to 21. Lower drunk driving arrest rates for youth closely paralleled the changing legal standard. The decline in driving while intoxicated arrests was particularly sharp among teenagers.[63]

HOMICIDE

During the ascendancy of the Baby Boom generation, **homicide rates for young adults more than doubled, reaching 14.5 per 100,000 in 1979.** Since then, the homicide rate has not shown a decisive trend. During 1986, 5,522 youth died in homicides or legal interventions—a rate of 14.2 per 100,000.

Homicides are unduly high among young black men. The lifetime probability of a 16-year-old black male being murdered is one in 40, suggesting that 2.5 percent eventually will die a violent death. Indeed, if recent rates persist, black men between ages 15 and 24 will lose six-tenths of one percent of their population to homicide before age 25. In other words, 625 of every 100,000 black men turning 15 this year will die in homicides before age 25. For white males the risk is lower, about 92 in every 100,000.[64]

SUICIDE

During 1986, 5,120 youth committed suicide. Although the suicide rate among youth is one-third lower than the rate for older Americans, at 13.1 per 100,000, it is half again the rate of the 1950s. The rate had risen slowly but progressively during good and bad economic times, and before and after the big upswing in drug use in the 1960s and 1970s. It reached a level of 12.4 per 100,000 in 1979 and has moved erratically higher since then. Experts and laypersons alike associate increases in the suicide rate with competitive pressures for success, to the decline of the nuclear family, and, more generally, to ennuie—an increased sense of aloneness and depression in our society. Suicide rates are more than three times higher for men than for women, and appear to be somewhat higher among college students than nonstudents. Blacks are less than half as likely to commit suicide as are whites.

HEALTH RISK FACTORS

Generally speaking, our society has tended to move in the direction of healthier behavior during the 1980s. Consumption of red meat per capita has declined, more Americans are exercising, fewer are smoking, and a variety of other measures of health consciousness are moving in a positive direction. However, more progress is possible and required, especially among youth who are at crucial starting points for personal behaviors that endanger their adult health.

USE OF CIGARETTES

Cancer is the third leading cause of death in the United States, and lung cancer is clearly much more frequent

among smokers as are various heart and other lung diseases. Most cigarette smokers began smoking while teenagers. Today, close to half of all eighth-grade students have tried cigarettes, and more than 70 percent of our young people have done so by the tenth grade. By the time they are seniors, about 18 percent of all youth are using cigarettes daily. In the late 1970s, daily use of cigarettes by high school seniors dropped sharply (from about 29 percent in 1976–77 to 20 percent in 1980.) However, there has been very little progress since 1980.[65]

USE OF ALCOHOL

National survey data paint a vivid picture of the extent and nature of alcohol use and abuse by young Americans. Ninety-two percent of 1988 high school seniors had tried alcohol, almost two-thirds had done so in the past 30 days, and 4 percent had done so each day for the last 30 days. Graduates of earlier classes that went on to college had increased their use of alcohol. Almost nine of ten college students had used alcohol in the past year. Bouts of heavy drinking (five or more drinks on one occasion in the two weeks prior to the survey) were reported by about half of the college men and one-third of college women.[66]

Although the prevalence of drinking among young people is altogether too high, there has been a modest reduction since the late 1970s. As illustrated in the tabulation below, high school seniors of 1988 were much less likely than their peers in 1979 to have been drinking recently or regularly.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS' DRINKING PATTERNS
(percent)

	Class of 1979	Class of 1988
Drank in the last 30 days	71.8	63.9
Drank daily	6.9	4.2

Source: University of Michigan, News and Information Services, "Teen Drug Use Continues to Decline," press release, February 28, 1989, pp. 6–8

Younger teenagers also report significant alcohol use. In 1985, at the time of the last major survey of alcohol and drug use covering the entire population, almost 56 percent of all 12 to 17-year-olds reported that they had tried alcohol, and 32 percent had used it in the last month. These ratios were marginally lower than in 1979 but still as high as in 1974. In all, **30 million 12 to 25-year-olds reported drinking in the 30 days before the 1985 survey, and 6.8 million were less than 18 years of age, clearly below the legal drinking age in any state.**[67]

USE OF ALCOHOL BY AMERICAN YOUTH

Age and Year	PERCENT THAT USED ALCOHOL: Ever	Last Year	Last Month
12 to 17 years:			
1985	55.9	52.0	31.5
1979	70.3	53.6	37.2
1974	54.0	51.5	34.0
18 to 25 years:			
1985	92.8	87.4	71.5
1979	95.3	86.6	75.9
1974	81.6	77.1	69.3

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Highlights: 1985 National Survey On Drug Abuse*, (NIDA, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 7–9

Use of alcohol by youth is frequently associated with trouble with the law. The most direct connection is arrests for liquor law violations, drunkenness, or driving under the influence. During 1986, more than one million youth were arrested under such statutes, including about 450,000 who were arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol.[68] In 1983, at the time of the last survey of jail inmates, almost 4,000 youth were in jail on drinking while driving convictions or charges. Data from the survey suggest that many of those in jail had earlier convictions for drinking and driving.

DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse by youth peaked during the late 1970s and has diminished significantly since then. Evidence on drug use from the annual survey of high school seniors shows that overall abuse of drugs by high school seniors and by those seniors who go on to college was down more than one-third from 1979 to 1988. There was a net reduction between 1987 and 1988 in all classes of drugs. Marijuana use has declined markedly since 1979, and there were significant reductions over the period in the use of most other drugs, except cocaine. Use of cocaine had increased for the classes of 1985 and 1986 compared to the class of 1984. Finally, **in 1987 and 1988, cocaine use in all categories (tried at least once, used in last year, and used daily in the last month) declined to the lowest level since 1977–1978.**

According to data from the larger survey that covers the entire population, including for example school dropouts, the use of marijuana, the drug most frequently used by all age groups in our society, dropped sharply over the 1979–1985 period. Among young adults in the age group 18 to 25, the proportion that had ever tried marijuana declined about one-tenth, use in the last year had fallen by more than two-tenths, and use in the last month had fallen almost four-tenths. Use of marijuana by 18 to 25 year-olds was at a lower rate in 1985 than in any of the surveys conducted since measurement began in 1972.

Nonetheless, at the time of the survey, **more than seven million youth had used marijuana in the past 30 days.**

USE OF MARIJUANA: 1974–85

Age and Year	PERCENT THAT USED MARIJUANA: Ever	Last Year	Last Month
12 to 17 years:			
1985	23.7	20.0	12.3
1979	30.9	24.1	16.7
1974	23.0	18.5	12.0
18 to 25 years:			
1985	60.5	37.0	21.9
1979	68.2	46.9	35.4
1974	52.7	34.2	25.2

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Highlights: 1985 National Survey On Drug Abuse*, (NIDA, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 7–9

Before the 1987 and 1988 downturn in cocaine use, an estimated 2.5 million 18 to 24-year-olds and 400,000 12 to 17-year-olds had used cocaine in the 30 days before the 1985 survey. Until recently, there was more prestige surrounding the use of cocaine than other drugs.

COCAINE USE BY AMERICAN YOUTH: 1974–85

Age and Year	PERCENT THAT USED COCAINE: Ever	Last Year	Last Month
12 to 17 years:			
1985	5.2	4.4	1.8
1982	6.5	4.1	1.6
1979	5.4	4.2	1.4
1974	3.6	2.7	1.0
18 to 25 years:			
1985	25.2	16.4	7.7
1982	28.3	18.8	6.8
1979	27.5	19.6	9.3
1974	12.7	8.1	3.1

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Highlights: 1985 National Household Survey On Drug Abuse*, (NIDA, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 7–9

Drug use has adverse legal and medical consequences for many youth. During 1987, 350,000 were arrested for drug abuse violations and an estimated 150,000 were in jail, prison, or juvenile correction facilities for drug-related offenses.[68] Data on medical treatment for drug-related emergencies in hospitals are available for a sample of hospitals in 27 large cities that collectively contain about one-third of the nation's population. These data show sizable numbers of serious drug-related problems; more than 35,000 15 to 25-year-olds were treated for drug-related medical emergencies in 1986. Medical examiners' reports show a strong correlation between drug-use and suicide. About one-third of the deaths and 37 percent of the emergency room treatments for drug problems involved suicide attempts. Often these suicide attempts involved mixing drugs and alcohol.[69]

USE OF HEALTH SERVICES

Use of health services by youth has changed little since the late 1960s, when programs like Medicaid extended health care services to more of the low-income segment of the population. Overall hospital and emergency room use by youth show a modest decline in the 1980s from the 1970s. Fewer births per capita, the major reason for hospital use by young women, and a reduction in the automobile accident rate, a major reason for hospitalization of young men, appear to account for the small declines.[70]

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Young adults are less likely to be covered by health insurance than older adults, and coverage ratios are much lower for blacks and hispanics than for whites. Late in 1987, **21.4 percent of 16 to 24-year-olds were not covered by health insurance programs.** By contrast, the proportion of the overall civilian population not covered was one-third lower, about 13.3 percent. Of the 78.6 percent of covered youth, about 8 percent were covered by public programs and the remainder by private plans. Employment-related health insurance coverage extends to only about 55 percent of all 16 to 24-year-olds compared to about 75 percent of middle-aged persons, who are more likely to be employed.[71] Coverage of minority youth is lower, even when public programs, such as Medicaid, are taken into account.

Notes

62. National Center For Health Statistics, *Advance Report of Final Mortality Statistics, 1986*, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Volume 35, Number 6, (NCHS, Hyattsville MD: 1988) pp. 21, 23–28, 47

63. L. Greenfeld, *Drunk Driving*, NCJ-109945, (Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 1–9
64. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Population At Risk Rates and Selected Crime Indicators*, (Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 53, 57, 59
65. University of Michigan, News and Information Services, "Teen Drug Use Continues to Decline," press release, February 28, 1989, pp. 11
66. National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Illicit Drug Use, Smoking and Drinking by America's High School Students, College Students and Young Adults: 1975–1987*, DHHS Publication No. (ADM) 89-1602 (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) p. 277
67. National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Highlights: 1985 National Household Survey On Drug Abuse*, (NIDA, Washington DC: 1986) pp. 7–9
68. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime In The United States, 1987*, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) p. 180
69. National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Data From The Drug Abuse Warning Network, 1986*, Series 1, Number 6, (ADM) 88-1, pp. 10, 14, 47
70. National Center For Health Statistics, *Current Estimates From The National Health Interview Survey, 1987*, Series 19, Number 156, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 69, 113–25
71. Census Bureau, *Disability, Functional Limitation and Health Insurance Coverage: 1985*, Series P-70, Number 8, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 11, 14, 18

Crime

American youth are more likely to be victimized by a criminal, more likely to commit a crime, more likely to be arrested, and, after their early 20s, more likely to be imprisoned for committing a crime than any other segment of the nation's population. Young people may frequent dangerous environments more often than their elders, but that is not a precondition to experiencing a crime. Indeed, youth are exposed to crime in virtually all aspects of their daily lives. During 1987, for example, almost three million crimes—largely against teenagers—took place inside schools or on school property. About 465,000 of these crimes were violent acts, including 72,000 armed assaults or armed robberies.[72]

Young men have very high arrest rates. Pursuit of status by flaunting the law, the temptations of quick gratification, and peer pressures may lead to trouble with the law. Reflecting their greater vulnerability to such pressures, especially those youth without firm guidance, criminal offenders in our society are often young, minority males from urban poverty backgrounds.[73] **However, most disadvantaged youth are law-abiding and, indeed, more often are victims than offenders.**

CRIMES AGAINST YOUTH

Crime is common in our society. During 1987, almost one of every ten Americans more than 11 years of age fell victim to a personal crime.[74] Because they are more likely to be in close association with that segment of the population that commits the most street crimes (other youth), young people have much higher criminal victimization rates than the rest of the population; **more than one of every six 16 to 24-year-olds were victimized during 1987,** or nearly twice the proportion that persons over 25 years of age experienced.

THEFTS

Each year, about one in 15 Americans has something stolen. Theft is much more common among the young: about one of every nine youth experience a theft in a typical year, about triple the experience of 50 to 64-year-olds. Thefts from young people usually involve small losses: nearly two-thirds of completed larcenies involved the loss of money or items valued at less than $100. Thefts are reported to the police most frequently when there is some hope of recovering the property or when insurance coverage requires reporting. However, less than 30 percent of thefts from youth are reported, since most losses are regarded by the victim as unrecoverable or insignificant, and, therefore, reporting is "not worth the bother."

Households maintained by youth, and especially those maintained by teenagers, are more likely to be burglarized or suffer thefts than households maintained by middle-aged adults. Youth also are more likely to have their cars stolen than are adults.

VIOLENT CRIMES

While theft is a pervasive, costly, and sometimes threatening crime, the consequences of violent criminal acts often are much more serious. One of every 35 Americans older than 11 years of age suffers an attempted or completed crime of assault, robbery, or rape annually. **More than one out of every 15 youth experienced a violent crime during 1987,** or triple the violent crime rate for 35 to 49-year-olds. Nor are the numbers of violent crimes against youth inconsiderable. In 1987, **there were about 2.2 million completed or attempted violent crimes against youth.** Youth are more likely than older victims to take self-protective actions in a violent crime situation and are somewhat more likely to be injured than are older crime victims. About **30 percent** of the youthful victims **sustained physical injury,** and many required some form of medical treatment. About **six percent** of all young victims of violent crimes and 20 percent of those injured **received hospital care.** More than 30 percent receive treatment in an emergency room, and

VIOLENT CRIMES PER 1,000 YOUTH: 1987

Total	64.7
Rape	1.8
Robbery	9.4
Completed with injury	(2.5)
Attempted with injury	(1.0)
Completed without injury	(3.4)
Attempted without injury	(2.6)
Assault	53.5
Aggravated with injury	(4.8)
Simple assault with injury	(10.8)
Attempted with weapon	(13.9)
Attempted without weapon	(24.0)

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1987*, NCJ-115524, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1989) pp. 89–92

the remaining half are treated by friends or family, police officers or paramedics, or in doctors' offices.

The hundreds of thousands of attempted or completed violent crimes are a factor in youth's everyday decisions. Issues of personal safety have persuaded many that it is not safe to attend night school or to work at a job that requires late hours. **Reduced street crime, especially in inner-city poverty neighborhoods, would permit youth to take greater advantage of educational and employment opportunities.**

VICTIMIZATION PATTERNS

There are significant differences in criminal victimization rates of youth by gender, race, and residence. Except for rape, young women experience much lower violent crime rates than men. For example, men are almost twice as likely as to be robbed or assaulted as young women. There are also large differences by gender in the victim's relationship to the offender. Almost 60 percent of all violent crimes against young women are committed by someone known to the victim. By contrast, almost two-thirds of the attempted and completed violent crimes against young men are committed by strangers. Youth who live in inner cities experience much higher crime rates than those who live in the suburbs. Suburban youth, in turn, have higher victimization rates than do youth who live in small towns or rural areas. Blacks and Hispanics experience marginally higher crime rates than do whites. Thefts are more frequent for whites, and violent personal crimes are higher for blacks.

Murder rates are not measured in the National Crime Survey, but administrative figures from police departments around the country paint a grim picture of violence, especially for young black men. Almost 4,500 youth were murdered during 1987, more than half of those slain were black youth. In 1986, **murder rates for 25-year-olds stood at** six in every 100,000 for white women, 16 in every 100,000 for white men, 26 in every 100,000 for black and other races women, and **102 for every 100,000 black and other races men.** At age 15, the lifetime probability of a black male being murdered is four times the probability for black girls, five times that for white males, and more than ten times that of white girls.[75]

About half of all violent crimes committed against young adults were reported to the police—and sometimes there were reports to other officials, such as school authorities. Reporting to the police was somewhat more frequent when the crime was committed by an unknown assailant, and the frequency of reporting was greater for completed than for attempted crimes. When the offender was known to the victim, the most frequent reason for reporting the crime to the police was to ensure that the victimization was not repeated.

CRIMINAL OFFENDERS

Young victims of violent crimes usually perceive the age(s) of the offender(s) to be in the 20s. Only a minority of offenders are thought by the victim to be more than 30 years of age. The majority of victims identified the offender as being of the same race and generally around the same age as the victim. Only 5.5 percent of the offenders were lone women, whereas more than three-fourths of the time the offender(s) were male. Arrest records strongly support the assessment of victims. The typical arrestee is a young male; his crime is often quite easily detected; and he is likely to be a repeater. His involvement with the law enforcement system often began early in life, sometimes before the age of ten. **One of every 12 persons arrested for a violent crime is less than 18 years old, and one in five property crime arrests is a person less than 18.**[76]

Many convicted offenders are from poverty backgrounds; they often are behind or no longer enrolled in school; they have a much higher frequency of unemployment; and, when employed, they are more likely than their peers to be in marginal, low-paying jobs.[77] The propensity of youth to commit crimes apparently declines with age. Property crime arrests peak at age 16, and violent crime arrests peak at age 18.[78] In part, the arrest pattern reflects the neutralization of habitual offenders by imprisonment and the filtering out of those early offenders who "go straight." Recent research on the latter topic, maturing out of criminal behavior, supports the conventional view that the availability of constructive alternatives to crime does make a difference. Simply put, arrest rates for teenagers are lower in states where employment opportunities are more plentiful. For youth in their early 20s, arrest rates are lower in states where higher quality employment opportunities (full-time jobs at higher than minimum wages, for example) are more plentiful.[79] Thus, a straight forward way of dealing with criminal behavior is to encourage the fullest possible provision of meaningful employment opportunities.

ARREST TRENDS

There was a sustained, major rise in arrests of youth during the 1960s and 1970s. The arrest rate for 10 to 17-year-olds rose from about 3.6 percent of the "eligible" population in 1960 to a peak of 8.2 percent in the mid 1970s. Since then, it has slipped back to around 7.7 percent. These arrest figures include a significant number of multiple arrests of the same individual, but it is clear that the underlying trend was up for the general population.

Sixty-two percent of all arrests for property crimes and almost half of all violent crime arrests are persons under 25 years of age. In police jurisdictions responsible for about 80 percent of the nation's population, **5.1 million**

youth were arrested during 1987, including 1.3 million for the crimes of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, or arson, and the remainder for lesser offenses.

The over-representation of young people in arrest and incarceration figures is primarily a result of property crime. Violent crime convictions, by contrast, are about the same for teens, young men, and mature men.[80] There is no clear evidence that petty crimes escalate over time to more violent crimes, but there is some indication that violent juvenile offenses are good predictors of violent adult offenses. That is, those who were once committed for violent crimes as youth, or even as pre-teens, are more likely to reappear as violent adult offenders.

Environmental factors doubtless play a role in the formation of criminal behavior. Those abused as children, for example, apparently are more likely to engage in crime, and to do so in a more violent manner.[81] Offenders of all ages are more likely to have had one or more relatives who have been in prison and to have been raised in undisciplined, frequently violent home settings. Heavy drinking and drug abuse were common among youth in juvenile correctional facilities, especially for those serving time for property crimes.[82]

Because of the design of the criminal justice system, persons less than 19 years of age are seldom held in jails or prisons for significant periods. However, the nation's jails and prisons are heavily stocked with young adults. The latest quinquennial surveys of local jails and of state prisons show that well over half the incarcerated population is less than 30 years of age and a substantial proportion are less than 25 years of age. **Like the victims of crime, the incarcerated are most often male, poor, and less educated. They are much more likely than the general population to be drug and alcohol abusers, and they tend to have experienced little success in the labor market.**

JUVENILE INMATES

A youth's first arrest is likely to result in little more than a warning. During 1986, for example, three of every ten arrests of juveniles were handled within the police department, and the offender was released.[83] Subsequent arrests may lead to limited informal supervision by social services agencies. After a collection of seemingly minor offenses, or a serious violent crime, a young offender is likely to experience a first detention in a juvenile facility. **During 1987, an estimated 590,000 were placed in public juvenile detention and correctional facilities,** and perhaps another 115,000 in private facilities. The average daily population in public juvenile facilities increased seven percent between 1983 and 1987, despite a sizable reduction in the total number of youth. We spent almost $1.5 billion in 1986 to staff, operate, and maintain public juvenile correction and detention facilities.[84]

On February 2, 1987, 56,097 young people were being held involuntarily in juvenile detention or correction facilities run by public authorities. **Just over 94 percent of these adolescents were accused of or had been committed to the institution for acts that would be criminal acts if committed by an adult.** One-fourth of the adolescents (13,300) were being held for violent offenses against persons, including **almost 8,000 held for such violent crimes as murder, aggravated assault, robbery, or forcible rape.** Almost half were held for property crimes including auto theft, burglary, larceny-theft, and arson. Eight percent were being held for parole violations, and eight percent were held for narcotics/alcohol violations. Males constituted 86 percent of all juveniles in public custody in 1987. Non-Hispanic whites were 44 percent, blacks 39 percent, Hispanics 15 percent, and other races 2 percent. Hispanics (who may be of any race) accounted for about twice their proportion in the population, while blacks accounted for almost three times their proportion of the juvenile population.

The rate of confinement per 100,000 of the age-eligible population was 208 for public facilities in 1987, up sharply from 185 in 1985. Almost 70 percent of the juveniles in custody in 1987 were committed (in effect, sentenced), 30 percent were detained (in effect, under arrest), and less than one percent were voluntary admissions.

COMMENT

Causality in criminal behavior, as well as other behaviors, is difficult to quantify. There is abundant evidence, however, that large proportions of criminal offenders are from poverty backgrounds, are less educated, and grew up in turbulent, sometimes abusive, homes. However, **the vast majority of persons from poverty backgrounds are not criminals, and the vast majority of youth who have a scrape with the law enforcement system do not become criminals.**

As with several other areas of concern about the progress of youth toward constructive maturity, criminal behavior appears for many youngsters well before they qualify as youth. **Thus, any set of interventions designed to assist youth in avoiding the pitfalls of criminal behavior must be aimed in large part at a pre-teen audience, with special focus on the poorest and least educated segments of our society.**

Notes

72. J. Wetzel, "School Crime: A Statistical Snapshot," Winter 1989, p. 8 and "Kids and Crime," *School Safety*, National School Safety Newsjournal Spring 1988, p. 4–7
73. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Report To The Nation On Crime And Justice*, NCJ-105506, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 42–44, 101–112
74. All victimization data are from Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1987*, NCJ-115524, (USGPO, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 1–179
75. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Population At Risk Rates and Selected Crime Indicators*, (Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 53, 57, 59
76. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime In The United States, 1987*, (FBI, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 9, 161, 225 and *Age-Specific Arrest Rates, 1965–86*, (FBI, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 46–49
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82. A. Beck, S. Kline and L. Greenfeld, *Survey of Youth in Custody, 1987*, Special Report, NCJ-113365, (BJS, Washington DC: 1988) pp. 1–9
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Publications of

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- The following **Working Papers** were prepared for the Commission's deliberations by a variety of scholars and practitioners. They are available from the Commission at *$10.00 each postpaid.*

Youth Transition from Adolescence to the World of Work *by Garth L. Mangum.* **Commentaries** *by Marvin Lazerson and Stephen F. Hamilton.*

Summarizes labor market realities, employer expectations, parental influences, and the difficulties youth experience as they move into the world of work. Highlights vocational education, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities available for youth. Makes recommendations for how families, schools, and workplaces can aid youth in the transition to work.

Youth and the Workplace: Second-Chance Programs and the Hard-to-Serve *by Thomas J. Smith, Gary C. Walker, Rachel A. Baker, (Public/Private Ventures).* **Commentaries** *by Gary Burtless, Jacqueline P. Danzberger, Morton H. Sklar, Richard F. Elmore.*

Second-chance education, training, and employment programs of the last decade are detailed. Includes tables and an appendix of model programs for at-risk youth. Four commentaries expand the research and policy recommendations.

Vanishing Dreams: The Growing Economic Plight of America's Young Families *by Clifford M. Johnson, Andrew M. Sum, and James D. Weill.* (Published by Children's Defense Fund with partial assistance from Youth and America's Future.)

Publications of Youth and America's Future

Who Will Train and Educate Tomorrow's Workers? The Financing of Non-College-Bound Young Workers' Recurrent Education *by Robert Sheets, Andrew Hahn, Robert Lerman and Erik Butler.*

Advocates the need for universal recurrent education and discusses practical ways of achieving expanded post-secondary opportunities for non-college youth, the major losers in today's labor market. Describes public, private, and cooperative strategies that can begin to close the gap between education and work.

Youth and Work: What We Know, What We Don't Know, What We Need to Know *by Ivan Charner and Bryna Shore Fraser (National Institute for Work and Learning).* **Commentaries** *by Sue E. Berryman and Hayes Mizell.*

A comprehensive analysis of research on the educational, occupational, and personal benefits youth accrue through work. Examines work patterns of demographic subgroups, roles and responsibilities of youth workers, reasons for and attitudes toward participation in work, and actual work experiences.

The Bridge: Cooperative Education for All High School Students *by Cynthia Parsons.* **Commentaries** *by Dennis Gray and David Lynn, Morgan V. Lewis, Roy L. Wooldridge.*

Calling for a fundamental change in American high schools, the founder of a successful Vermont community service program presents a rationale and methodology for experiential and cooperative education models. Underscores the benefits of combining learning and doing in a school-based, supervised setting.

What Does the Independent Sector Do for 16–24 Year-Olds? *by Miriam M. Wood.* **Commentaries** *by Virginia Hodgkinson and Leonard W. Stern.*

Identifies, quantifies, and analyzes the role of independent sector agencies and organizations serving 16–24 year-olds. Interprets factors, including funding and organizational barriers, that affect the vitality of human service agencies.

The Interaction of Family, Community, and Work in the Socialization of Youth *by Stephen F. Hamilton.* **Commentaries** *by John Ogbu and Paul Riesman.*

Explores the critical connections among family, community, and the workplace as they interact with young people. Calls for establishing intentional policy among these three spheres of influence to bolster their separate, but interconnected roles in socializing youth.

The Difference that Differences Make: Adolescent Diversity and Its Deregulation *by Melvin D. Levine, M.D.* **Commentaries** *by Michael S. Wald and John H. Martin.*

Discusses how teaching methods and expectations can constrict the ways in which young people learn, denying many access to education and employment opportunities. Contends that predetermined memory, verbal, and written criteria—to which a large number of students cannot and do not respond well—are often the only vehicles for showing knowledge. Argues for a wider lens through which to view young people and their abilities.

Transitional Difficulties of Out-of-Home Youth *by Joy Duva and Gordon Raley.* **Commentaries** *by Eileen M. Pasztor and Peter R. Correia III and Anita Fream.*

A targeted look at a vulnerable part of the youth population—foster care youth and runaways—who they are, how many they are, what programs serve them, what special problems they encounter in their transition to adulthood, what more needs to be done. Examines independent living programs that assist older out-of-home youth in preparing for life and work.

The Transition to Adulthood of Youth with Disabilities *by David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb, and Edwin W. Martin.* **Commentaries** *by Sharon Stewart Johnson and Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin.*

Cites youth with disabilities as an economically disadvantaged subgroup and explores family support, education, and employment issues as well as the barriers to community participation and self-sufficiency particular to these youth. Includes extensive research findings and policy recommendations.

Mutuality in Parent-Adolescent Relationships *by James Youniss.* **Commentaries** *by Ann C. Crouter and John H. Lewko.*

Through a comprehensive review of recent research, counters popular mythology that adolescent relationships with parents and peers are negative. Provides a context for adolescent-parent and adolescent-peer relationships to guide program development and policy considerations.

Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports *by Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein, and Julia Littell, with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken.* **Commentaries** *by Diane P. Hedin and Judith B. Erickson.*

What can communities do to be more responsive to youth and what can communities expect from youth? Explores the rich variety of community supports that can be made available to adolescents if individual communities decide to make youth a priority. Appendix includes 22 selected studies describing the differing impacts of community supports on adolescents.

Determinants of Youth's Successful Entry into Adulthood *by Sarah Gideonse.* **Commentaries** *by Elijah Anderson and David F. Ricks.*

What prevents youth from successful entry into adulthood: individual defects or environment flaws? Addresses the factors which account for the difficulties youth have in assuming adult roles. Examines characteristics and circumstances that promote positive changes in young people and explains why it is never too late for interventions—even for youth with multiple problems.

Family Influences on Transitions to the Adult Job Market *by Robert I. Lerman and Theodora Ooms.* **Commentaries** *by Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and Margaret Simms.*

Analyzes the often ignored interrelationship of family influences and youth employment decisions. Emphasizes the critical connections among youth's living arrangements, the responsibilities of young people, and their choices about work.

Barriers to Developing Comprehensive and Effective Youth Services *by William Treanor.* **Commentaries** *by David Richart and Dorothy Stoneman.*

A provocative discussion of the youth service world: prevailing attitudes toward youth, history, funding dilemmas, and leadership and staffing scenarios. Recommends a prototype for youth service systems.

ANNOUNCING...
IMPORTANT NEW RESOURCES FROM...

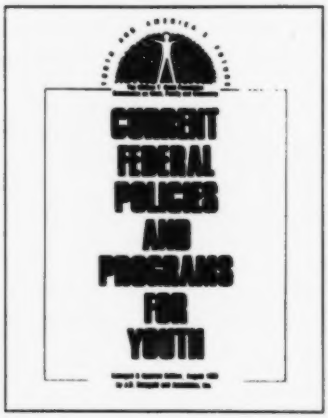
Youth and America's Future:

The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship

NEW AND UPDATED RELEASES FOR 1989-1990

1. CURRENT FEDERAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH, 1989-1990

by J.R. Reingold and Associates



At last, an easy-to-use guide through the maze of federal programs for adolescents and young adults. There is a surprising amount of activity in support of young people. This new and expanded revised edition of Current Federal Policies and Programs for Youth makes it possible for those "outside the Washington beltway" to make sense of who's doing what for young people.

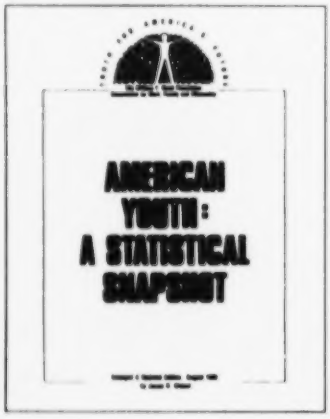
Program descriptions with current funding levels, as well as the Bush Administration's 1990 budget proposals, are included for scores of programs in five departments: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Justice, and Defense. Each agency's major activities and current directions for youth are highlighted and put into perspective by a brief but provocative introduction. A rich appendix provides additional sources of reliable information.

For practitioners and policymakers who need to know what funding is available and for the researcher who needs comprehensive budget data covering several years, *Current Federal Policies and Programs, 1989-1990* is "a must resource." **$5.00 postpaid.**

2. AMERICAN YOUTH: A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT, 1989-1990 *by James R. Wetzel*

At a time when Americans are deeply concerned about youth . . .we are too easily swayed toward stereotyping all youth through powerful anecdotal evidence, rather than seeing them as they really are.

Harold Howe II,
–former US Commissioner of Education



This 1989-90 edition of *American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot* counters the tendency to sterotype by clearly and thoroughly documenting the current status of American youth and the direction of trends that affect their future and ours. The latest U.S. Census Bureau and other reliable data provide a comprehensive outline of education, employment, income, drug and alcohol use, and rates of marriage and childbearing among our nation's 16 to 24-year olds. Breakdowns by race, sex, and ethnicity are included and major findings are vividly displayed in a dozen charts and graphs. The depth and breadth of this sometimes surprising overview of youth makes this invaluable resource compelling reading for anyone interested in young people and America's future. **$5.00 postpaid.**

ALSO AVAILABLE

THE FORGOTTEN HALF: NON-COLLEGE YOUTH IN AMERICA, *January 1988.* Focuses on the obstacles young people face and the opportunities they need to successfully make the school-to-work transition – especially the half of our 16-25 year-olds who are not likely to go on to college. Many charts, tables, and references. (108 pages) **$5.00 postpaid.**

THE FORGOTTEN HALF: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR AMERICA'S YOUTH AND YOUNG FAMILIES, *November 1988.* Presents sobering data on the declining economic fortunes of American youth. An impressive array of research and exemplary programs chart the many pathways that young people need to succeed not only as workers, but as parents, and citizens. (208 pages) **$5.00 postpaid.**

YOUTH POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES *by Rosemary George.* Presents the salient features of the post-compulsory education and training policies to smooth the transition of youth to work in 11 countries: Australia, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Norway, and Sweden. *Includes tables.* **$5.00 postpaid.**

FACTS AND FAITH: A STATUS REPORT ON YOUTH SERVICE *by Anne C. Lewis,* Commentary *by Jane Kendall.* Outlines the current knowledge about youth community service: what works, what doesn't and why. This vital resource cites dozens of local, state, and national programs and includes penetrating policy recommendations. Commentary stresses the value of service-learning, combining practical experience and academic study. **$5.00 postpaid.**

VANISHING DREAMS: THE GROWING ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF AMERICA'S YOUNG FAMILIES, *by Clifford M. Johnson, Andrew M. Sum, and James D. Weill.* (Published by Children's Defense Fund with assistance from Youth and America's Future.) Analyzes the widening economic gaps between young families with and without children, between young families headed by persons with the least and most education, and between younger and older families. Examines the consequences of falling earnings and incomes among young families: decreased marriage rates, growing inability to afford housing and child care, and declining health insurance coverage. Includes regional trends in economic status. **$10.00 postpaid.**

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